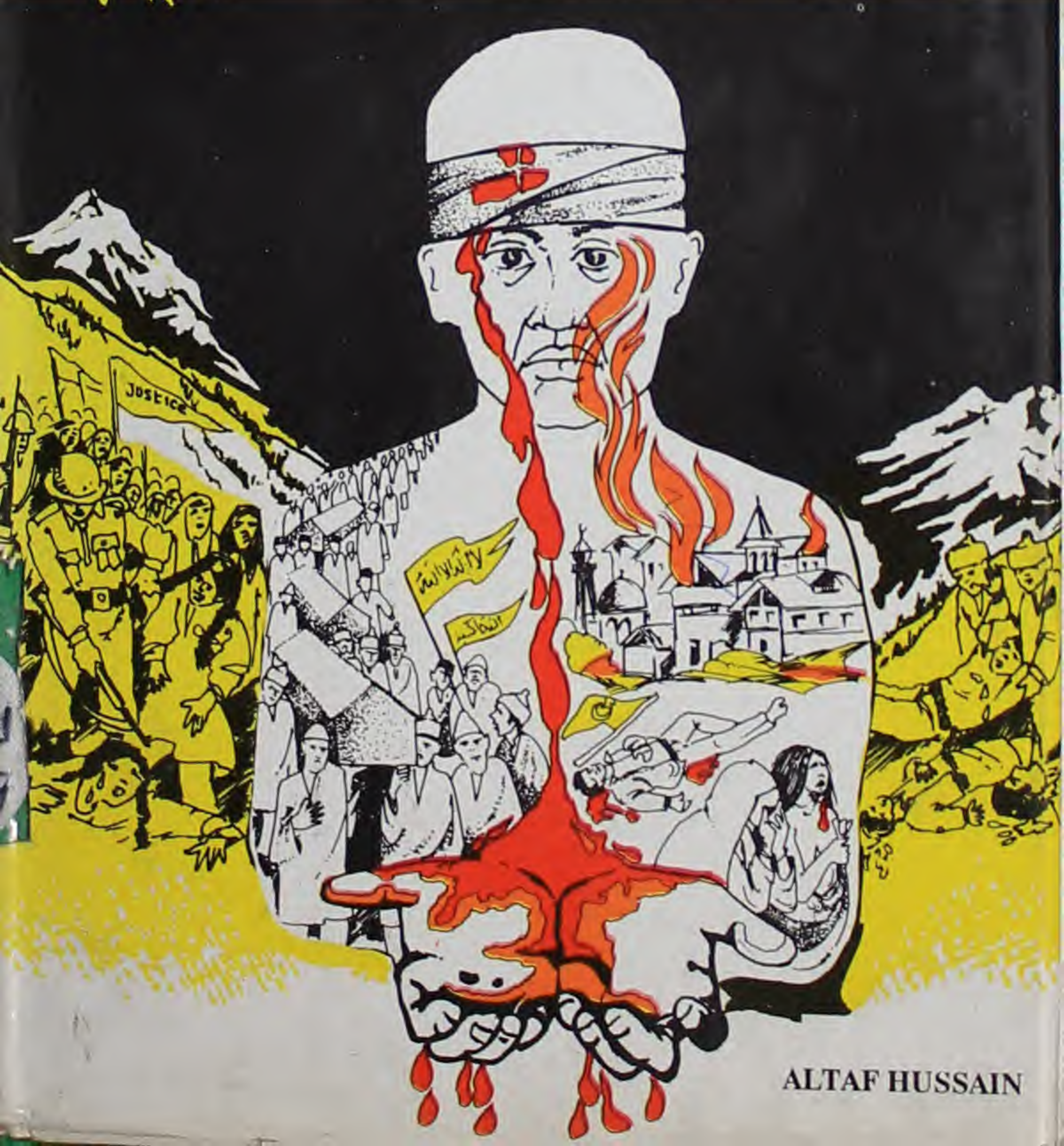


THE WOUNDED PARADISE



ALTAF HUSSAIN

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THE WOUNDED PARADISE

By
Altaf Hussain

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*To
My Parents
and
The Youth of Kashmir*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to my mother, Mrs. Shamla Mufti for the immense encouragement and invaluable assistance she offered me in this endeavour. I should like to record, with deep appreciation, the hardwork and research of late Mr. Mohammad Amin Mahjoor in reconstructing the flags of Kashmir which are reproduced in this book. I am obliged to the Mahjoor family for permitting me to include these flags in this work. I have benefited from the reports of J & K Peoples Basic Rights (Protection) Committee, Srinagar and the J & K High Court Bar Association, Srinagar and I express my gratitude to both the bodies. I am indebted to my friends and relations who have constantly encouraged me and also provided books and other relevant material; in particular, I should like to thank Mr. Mohammad Amin and Syed Manzoor Ahmed - advocates of High Court, Mr. Shafi Ahmed Qadiri, Mrs. Nazifa Yasvi, Mr. Abdul Rashid Mahjoor and Mr. Gowhar Maqbool. A special word of gratitude is due to Mr. Faiz Bakshi, who very kindly bought me S.C Ray's Early History & Culture of Kashmir. Thanks are due to Mr Irfan Qazi for his valuable assistance in this endeavour. I was overwhelmed by the patience, talent & courtesy shown to me by Mr. Sheikh Ajaz Ahmed in feeding-cum-editing work of this manuscript. Thanks are due to Mr. Ghulam Nabi Dar for typing out the manuscript with great care. I express my gratitude to my friend Mr. Masood Hussain for the work of cover-designing. I am highly obliged to Mr. Basharat Qamar-Ul Zaman in composing and lay-out designing of this book. I also owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Niaz Ahmed Mir for helpful suggestions regarding the cover-design. Finally, I should like to record my appreciation of my wife, Aamina and children - Asma and Murtaza whose willing co-operation proved of immense help to me.

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PREFACE

Kashmir's reputation as the nearest place to paradise that earth can provide is long standing. Emperors have flattered it in their sugary prose, scientists have turned into poets on the subject of Kashmir and poets have glamourized it. Apart from its scenic beauty, the arts and crafts of its artisans have earned laurels the world over. Kashmiris have been admired as far superior in culture and talent to any other people in the subcontinent.

Thanks largely to folklore and legend, Kashmir has been invested with abundant mystique. Moses is reputed to have led his people there from Egypt. Jesus is believed by a section of people to be buried in Srinagar. Solomon, according to legend, visited Kashmir and built a prayer-house at the top of the Takht - I - Sulaiman.

Kashmir has been known to outsiders from time immemorial. Herodotus, the famous Greek historian refers to Kashmir nearly 2500 years ago. Ptolemy, 2000 years back mentions Kashmir in his geographical account of India. The Chinese travellers, Hiuen Tsang in the 7th century and Ou-kong in the 8th century have written copiously about their experiences in and impressions of Kashmir. The Arab geographer Al-Masudi in the eighth century gives a sketchy description of the historical geography of Kashmir. However, a detailed description of old Kashmir in the Arabic literature is provided by Alberuni in the 11th century. The Venetian traveller, Marco Polo, in the middle of the 13th century remarks that 'people of Kashmir have no fear of anybody, and keep their independence with a king of their own, to rule and to do justice'. With the entry of the Mughals and the European travellers, the news of this other Eden spread to the outside world in an unprecedented manner. Thomas Moore, the Irish poet let his imagination on Kashmir go wild

and produced the epic poem called *Lalla Rookh* in 1817. More than 83,000 copies of this poem were sold in Europe and it went into 55 editions.

‘Beauty provoketh thieves sooner than gold’, is just as true of countries as it is of human beings. It is precisely the pretty looks of Kashmir that have condemned both the land and its people to misery and suffering. If Kashmir were an unattractive country, perhaps no invader would have coveted it.

Kashmir has been invaded culturally and politically innumerable times from the dawn of history by the Aryans, Mauryas, Greeks, Scythians, Kushans, Huns, Mongols, Turks, Mughals, Pathans, Sikhs and Dogras one after another. Subjugation of Kashmir has been uninterrupted over the last 400 years. The last 2 years have witnessed brutalisation and dehumanization of Kashmir. In spite of vicissitudes, Kashmir has managed to retain its individuality, both culturally and politically.

Independent Kashmir until 400 years ago has had civilized and brilliant periods in its history. Independence gives individuals and nations self-confidence : and self-respect. It ensures material benefits, spiritual satisfaction and intellectual nourishment. On the contrary, prolonged servitude of nations dwarfs, disfigures and degrades human beings. Servitude crushes the martial spirit of races and distorts the human personality. Though Kashmiris have survived conquests, oppressions, exploitation and extortion in their chequered history, yet the trauma of enslavement cannot be effaced. The colonial masters even arrogate to themselves the right of character assassination of the fettered people. Kashmiris have been castigated by their usurpers as ‘devious, dishonest’ and untrustworthy people’. Tyndale Biscoe, a British missionary in Kashmir in the last century concedes in his book, ‘Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade’: “If we Britishers had to undergo what the Kashmiris have suffered we might have lost our manhood.....Kashmiris will become once more a brave people, as they were in the days of old when their own kings led them forth to battle”

Kashmir has been in the news generally for the last four decades and it has been aflame in the last 2 years. Kashmir is once again struggling to unshackle itself. Currently, the Garden of Eden is bleeding and burning and is crying hoarse for justice.

I am neither a historian nor a professional writer but an ordinary citizen of the mercilessly battered Kashmir. I have attempted to present a bird's-eye view of Kashmir's eventful history with a view to giving the background of what is called the Kashmir dispute. I have essentially tried to put the searchlight on the tormented people than on their famed land. If the reader benefits by this humble attempt, in appreciating better the various aspects of Kashmir dispute, in a historical perspective, I shall feel amply rewarded.

May 15, 1991

*Goripora, Bypass Road,
Sanatnagar, Srinagar-5.*

Altaf Hussain

CHAPTER 1**GEOGRAPHY**

The State of Jammu and Kashmir, as it featured on the 15th August 1947 has an area of 222,880 square kilometres. It is mostly a mountainous region. Situated as it is in the heart of Asia, the State has common frontiers with China on the north and north-east, with Afghanistan on the north-west and with Pakistan and India on the western and southern sides. The State's border with Pakistan is about 900 kilometres long. A tongue-shaped projection of Afghan territory called Wakhan separates the Jammu & Kashmir State from the Soviet Union. The location of the State confers immense strategic importance on this land.

The State of Jammu and Kashmir, politically famous as Kashmir, consists of five distinct regions -- the valley of Kashmir, the Jammu region, Ladakh, Baltistan and Dardistan. From the north to the south, Kashmir extends over 640 kilometres and from east to west 480 kilometres. This irregular mountainous area lies between 32°17' North and 36°58' North latitude and 73°25' East and 80°30' East longitude. In latitude the geographical area of Kashmir corresponds to Peshawar (Pakistan), Baghdad (Iraq), Damascus (Syria), Fez (Morocco) and the state of South Carolina (USA)

Following the outbreak of hostilities between India and Pakistan in 1947 over the future of Kashmir, a cease-fire line came into being in January 1949 resulting in mutilation of Kashmir's geography. The Indian Kashmir has an area of 138,992 square kilometres whereas Pakistan Kashmir measures 83,787 square kilometres. The Chinese border with Pakistan Kashmir is undisputed and is 600 kilometres long.

Consequent upon the Sino-Indian war of 1962, China occupied 6,474 square kilometres in the Aksai Chin region of Ladakh, shrinking the longitudinal extent of Kashmir in the east from

80°30' East to 78° East longitude. The Chinese have laid claims to the Aksai Chin area from 1928 onwards.

Kashmir has been likened to a house with many storeys. There is just a fringe of level land along the Punjab frontier bordered by a low hilly country, sparsely wooded. These are parts of the Jammu province. Then comes the first storey constituted by a range of mountains about 8,000-12,000 feet high. This is a temperate region and houses valleys and forests. This area includes places like Baderwah, Kishtwar, Doda, Ramban, Rajouri, Poonch and Muzaffarabad. The steps of the Himalayan range known as the Pirpanjal lead to the second storey on which rests the valley of Kashmir. Up steeper flights of the Himalayas one passes to Astor and Baltistan on the north and to Ladakh on the east. In the back premises, far away to the north-west lies Gilgit, to the west and north of the river Indus. Further north of Gilgit, approximating the Pamirs, lie Hunza and Nagar. The whole area beyond Gilgit is shadowed by a wall of giant mountains which run east from the Hindukush range leading to the Pamirs and the Chinese territory past Rakaposhi (25,561 feet) along the Muztagh range past K₂ (Godwin Austen 28,265 feet) to the Karakoram range which merges in the Kuenlun mountains. These majestic ranges are the abodes of perpetual snow.

The northern region, particularly Baltistan, treasures some of the biggest glaciers outside the Arctic region, the greatest being the Siachen. This glacier is yet another bone of contention between India and Pakistan as the line of control on this glacier is in dispute.

Perched in the womb of the western Himalayas at an average height of 6,000 feet above the sea level, the valley of Kashmir is surrounded by high mountains. The twin peaks of Nun and Kun to the east exceed 23,000 feet and to the north-west the grand promontory of Nanga Parbat towers above the Indus to a height of 26,182 feet. The lowest point in the whole range is Zojila (11,300 feet), on the route from Srinagar to Ladakh.

The mountains surrounding the valley consist of

three main ranges, namely, the Pirpanjal range, the Jehlum Valley range and the North-Eastern ranges. The Pirpanjal range forms the highest line of the mountain barrier that divides the valley from the plains of India. It runs for about 50 kilometres from east to west, then turns to the north-west and continues in this direction for about 80 kilometres, attaining its greatest height in the Tatakuti peak (15,524 feet), it gradually descends thereafter towards the Jehlum Valley. All the important routes that connect Kashmir with the plains of northern India cut across this range.

The Jehlum Valley range consists of two small mountain chains which branch off from the Pirpanjal and the Kajnag ranges. Starting downwards from the Baramulla gorge, they continue along the Jehlum river for about 128 kilometres upto the confluence of the Jehlum and the Kishangange rivers at Domel. As this route does not pass through very high altitude, it is the only one which is practically free from snow throughout the year.

The north-eastern ranges separate the valley from Ladakh, Baltistan and Dardistan. Zojila and Burzil are the two important passes which lie in this range.

The mountain ramparts which surround the Kashmir Valley are pierced by a number of openings through which the valley maintained contacts with the outside world. Barely, a hundred years ago there were no roads linking Kashmir with the outside world. Pedestrians, ponies, elephants, and bullocks passed through these mountain passes. Though as many as twenty passes exist, only the following are historically significant:-

1) The Banihal pass (9,200 feet):-

It is situated at the eastern extremity of the Pirpanjal Range and connects the Valley with Jammu. Since the establishment of the Dogra rule in Kashmir in 1846 AD, communication and transport with Jammu began to be encouraged by this route. The Banihal road was opened to vehicular traffic in 1915. In spite of the construction of Jawahar Tunnel in 1957 at an altitude of

7,200 feet, this road remains a fair-weather road only, notwithstanding the enormous amounts of money spent on its maintenance. Because of the undependability of this road, the Valley remains cut-off from the Indian plains on and off.

2) The Budil Pass (14,000 feet):-

It connects Srinagar with Akhnoor and Sialkot. It is used only for foot traffic.

3) The Pirpanjal Pass (The Salt route, The Moghul route -11,400 feet):-

This pass links the Valley with Rajouri and Poonch which in turn lead to central and western Punjab. The Huns, the Mughals, the Pathans, the Sikhs and even the Dogras used this route. Currently a road called the Mughal road, is being constructed here to link Srinagar with Jammu via Rajouri.

4) The Tosamaidan Pass:-

This pass connects the Valley with Poonch. This route was followed by Hiuen Tsiang in the 7th century on his way from Srinagar to Poonch. Mahmud of Ghazni attempted invasions of Kashmir through this pass in the 11th century.

5) The Baramulla Pass:-

This is the easiest route from Punjab to Kashmir and it also links the valley with NWFP of Pakistan and Hazara district. This pass is open throughout the year and was until the partition of India, the only reliable route connecting the valley with the outside world. Famous visitors to Kashmir namely Hiuen Tsiang, OuKong, Alberuni, Mir Syed Ali Hamadani used this route. The route was on the right bank of river Jehlum.

The 300 kilometre long Jehlum valley road connecting Rawalpindi to Srinagar runs along the left bank of Jehlum. About 96 kilometres of this road are in the Pakistan territory which ends at

Kohala and the rest of 204 kilometres run through the Valley. Until 1878 AD, this track was only a cart road. Thanks to the efforts of Col. Parry Nisbet, the British Resident in Kashmir, the road was opened to vehicular traffic in 1890 AD. The road was the shortest tourist route to the Valley in the pre-1947 era. Almost 98% of Kashmir's exports like fruit, silk, shawls, carpets, papier mache, wood carving and dry skins were exported through this route. The Jehlum Valley road is closed now beyond Uri, 110 kilometres from Srinagar.

6) The Marble Pass (11,570 feet) :-

It connects Kashmir with Kishtwar.

7) The Zojila Pass (11,300 feet):-

It links Kashmir with Ladakh, Baltistan, Tibet and Central Asian regions of the Soviet Union and China. Since ancient times, this route has played a vital role in Kashmir affairs, commercially and culturally. Rinchan, the first Muslim ruler of Kashmir entered the valley from Ladakh via this route. Mirza Haider Dughlat invaded Kashmir in 1532 through this route.

8) The Burzil Pass(10,740 feet):-

It connects the valley with Dardistan - comprised of Astore, Chilas, Bunji, Gilgit, Yasin, Punial, Darel, Gupis, Ashkoman and Tangir. The Chak dynasty which played an important role in Kashmir history prior to Mughal occupation belonged to Dardistan.

9) Sino-Kashmir routes:-

From the northern areas, especially Leh, as many as three routes lead to Yarkand in the Sinkiang province of China. All the routes have to traverse many passes, on the Karakoram, whose heights range from 16,000 feet to 18,000 feet. Another route, historically known as the Silk route, linking Gilgit with Kashgar (Sinkiang) has been reactivated in the last few years. Strategically,

this road has assumed importance as it connects Islamabad, capital of Pakistan, with the peoples Republic of China.

THE PARADISE ON EARTH

*Who has not heard of the vale of Kashmir,
With its roses the brightest that earth ever gave,
Its temples and grottos and fountains clear,
As the love-lighted eyes that hang over their wave.*

Thomas Moore

Cradled by high mountains, the celebrated oval-shaped valley, is 6000 feet above the sea level. It is 136 kilometres long from north-east to south-west and 32-40 kilometres broad. Its area is 15,853 square kilometres. The valley comprises the plain formed by the river Jehlum and its tributaries. There are innumerable, small and big, plateaus raised above the plain.

The valley of Kashmir has been incredibly lavished with praise and admiration. It has been called the "Jewel of Asia" and also the "terrestrial paradise of the Indies". Its emerald pastures, sapphire waters and pearly snows have been widely acclaimed. The grand forests, bewitching flora and fauna are charming to the eyes and pleasing to the mind. The scenery of the Valley is ever changing from nook, knoll and dell.

Within the famed Valley there are a number of smaller, yet enchanting valleys like Lolab valley, Sind valley, and Lidar valley. The Valley abounds in famous hill resorts like Gulmarg, Tangmarg, Pahalgam, Khilanmarg, Kokernag, Achabal, Gandarbal and Sonamarg.

Urfi, the famous Persian poet exclaimed about Kashmir:

اگر فردوس بر روی زمین است
ہمیں است وہیں است وہیں است

Trans: *If there is a paradise on earth,
It is here, it is here, it is here.*

Iqbal, the great poet-philosopher in reference to Kashmir says:

*Its mountains, rivers and the sunset,
Unveiled the true self of God.*

The Valley has many lakes, each more beautiful than the other. Some of the famous lakes are as follows:-

1) **Wular Lake:** The largest fresh water lake in the subcontinent is about 16 kilometres long and 10 kilometres wide. Fish and duck are abundantly present. The lake produces hundreds of tons of water nuts (*Trape Bispinosa*). Cowley Lambert, a traveller on visiting the Lake in 1877 AD wrote:

“When I looked at this picture, I almost believed the tradition that this was the original garden of Eden”.

2) **Dal Lake:** Sir Walter Lawrence in his book ‘Valley of Kashmir’ describes the Dal Lake in the city of Srinagar as one of the most beautiful spots in the world. ‘The mountain ridges, which are reflected in its waters as in a mirror, are grand and varied, the trees and vegetation on the shores of the Dal lake are of exquisite beauty’. Lotus grows in great abundance here. On the western side of the Lake are the famous floating gardens. These are artificial and grow vegetables of different kinds. These ‘gardens’ can be easily moved from one place to another in the lake.

3) **Mansbal Lake** is in the Sind valley, about 28 kilometres from Srinagar. Dr. Arthur Neve in his book ‘Thirty Years in Kashmir’ says, that the lotus is nowhere more abundant or beautiful than on the marshes of this Lake.

4) **Kausarnag Lake** is situated in the Pirpanjal Range at a height of 15,000 feet above sea level. During summer months glaciers float over it like ferries.

Other lakes, equally worth seeing in the Valley include Sheshnag, Nilnag, Alapathar, Gadsar, Kishansar, Vishansar, Tsurbar, Tarsar, Marsar, Handisar, Gangabal, and Baribalsar.

There are innumerable springs and fountain-heads which no one has even been able to enumerate. Hassan, the 19th century geographer and historian has described 59 springs of the Valley.

There are a number of refreshing meadows in the Valley with luxuriant, natural growth of flowers. Gulmarg is the most famous of these meadows. The Chaks, the Mughals and the British admired it the most. Once Emperor Jehangir went to Gulmarg for recreation and when he put his hand on the flowers once, in a garden, about 25 flowers came to his hand. The colour of one flower was different from the other.

Tosamaidan is a grassy valley. It is almost a plain, for the hills on all sides slope gently down to it and the numerous streams which water it are divided by undulating ridges covered with luxuriant grass and wild flowers.

Other meadows include Sonamarg, Vishansar, Gangabal and Bangas.

The flowery valley is no less famous for its beautiful gardens - laid around the Dal Lake, on the banks of river Jehlum, along the borders of springs as well as at the foot hills of mountains. The most well known gardens are Shalimar, Nishat, Nagin, Chashma Shahi, Char Chinar, Achabal and Verinag.

Shalimar Garden was built by the Mughal Emperor Jehangir in 1619 AD. Once, while in the garden, Jehangir in a pleasant romantic mood deliberately feigned a quarrel with the empress Noor Jehan. Like a traditional helpless lover Jehangir soothed the empress' emotions by making a flat surrender. The scene is aptly described by Thomas Moore in his celebrated eastern

romance, Lalla Rookh, published in England in 1817.

*And well do vanished frowns enhance,
The charms of every brightened glance,
And dearer seems each dawning smile
For having lost its light a while,
And happier now for all her sighs,
And on his arm her head reposes,
She whispers him with laughing smile,
"Remember love, the feast of Roses"*

Thomas Moore

The praises of Kashmir cannot be contained within the narrow confines of language nor is it possible now to be original in the choice of epithets and adjectives with regard to Kashmir.

Allama Iqbal describes Kashmir thus:

*Alight in Kashmir and behold the mountains, the hills and the dales,
Behold the green grass all over and gardens full of poppies,
Feel the spring breeze in wave after wave; sea birds in myriads,
The wood pigeons and starlings in pairs on the poplars,
The poppies have sprouted from the dust; ripples play on the stream surface,
Behold the dust full of sparks and water wrinkled by ripples!*

Pandit B.R. Chakbast describes his native Kashmir in 1926:

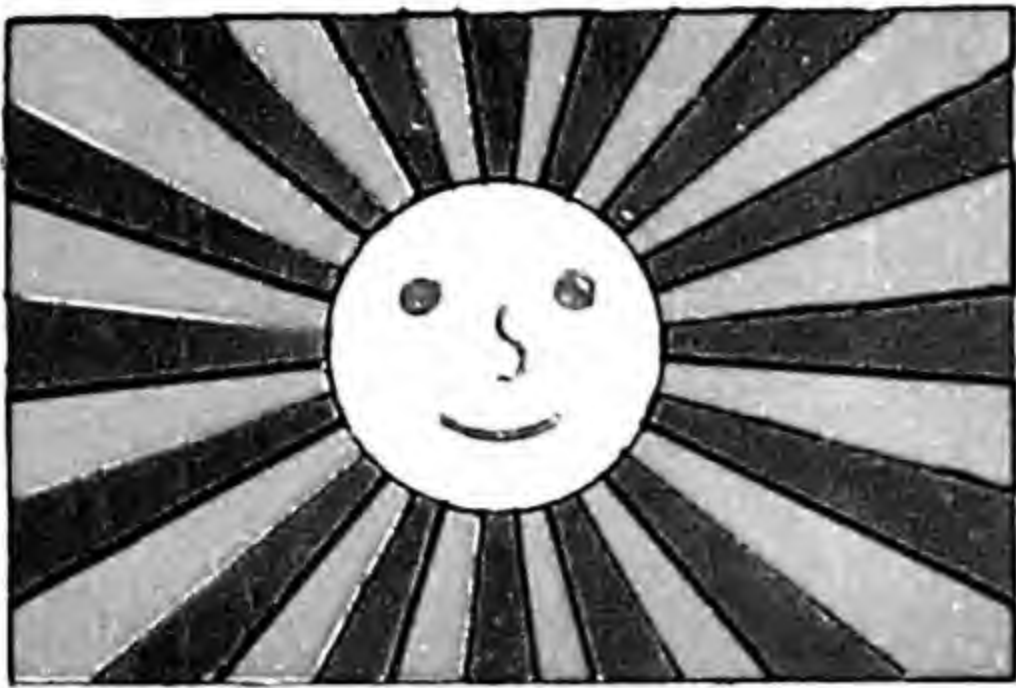
*How exceedingly hospitable is the land of Kashmir,
Even the way side stones offered me water to drink.*

Finally, I would like to quote the Times London 1907.(The Historians' History of the World).

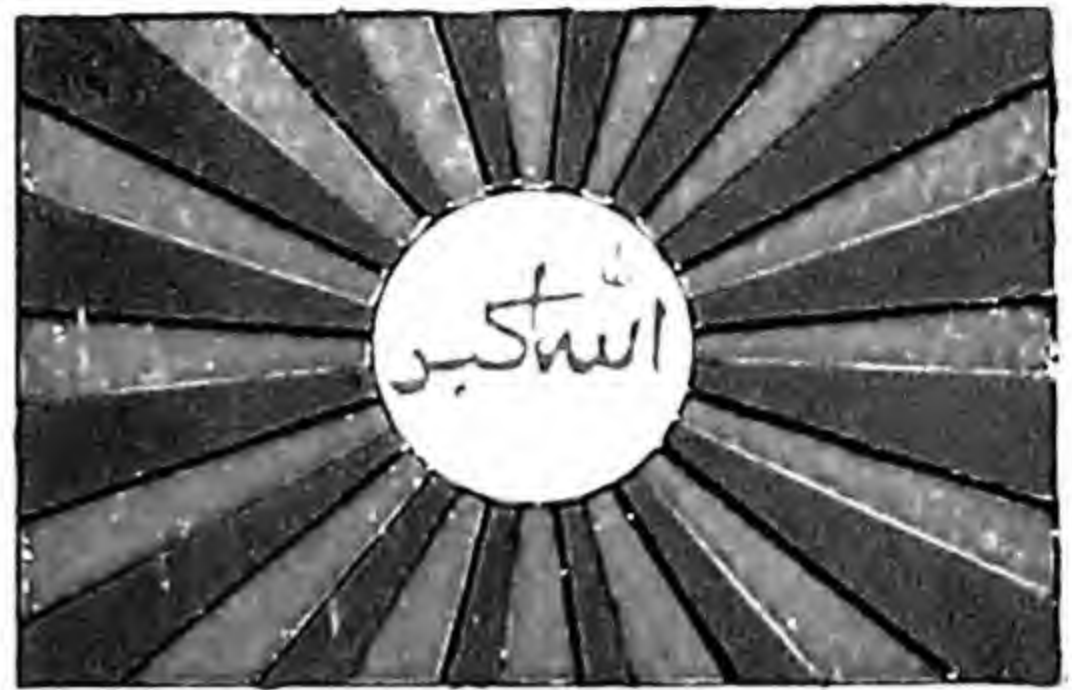
"Kashmir, verily an emerald of verdure enclosed in a radiant amphitheatre of virgin snow, is such a beautiful country, blest with a fertile soil, glorious climate, grand mountains, fine rivers and

lovely lakes, and with such charming flowers and delicious fruits, singing birds and sweet odours, that it once enjoyed a great fame as the seat of the original paradise of the human race”.

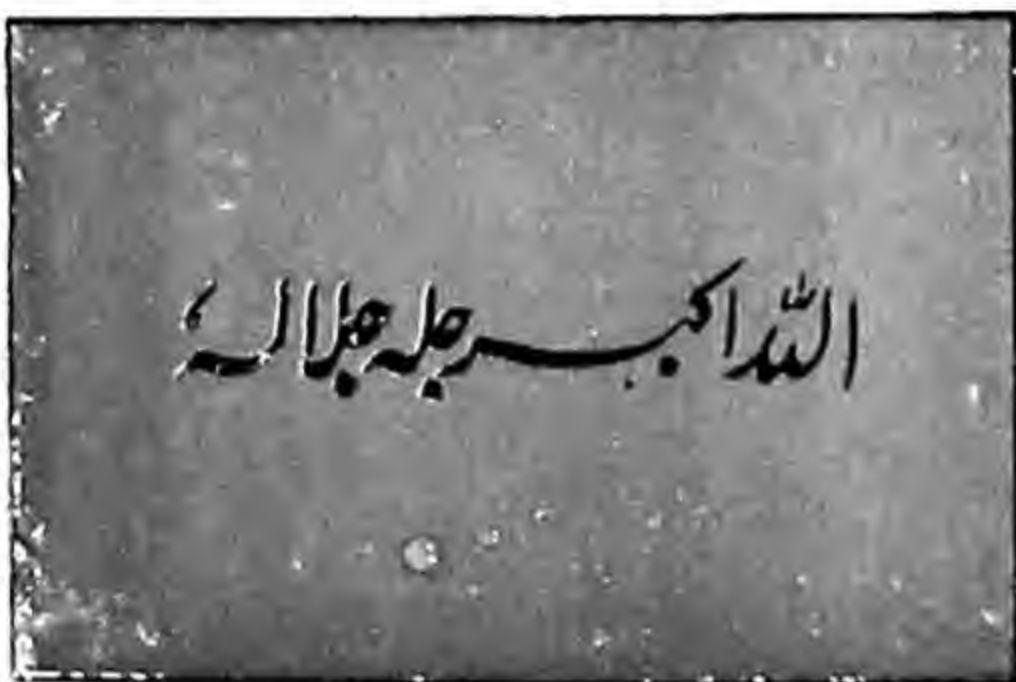
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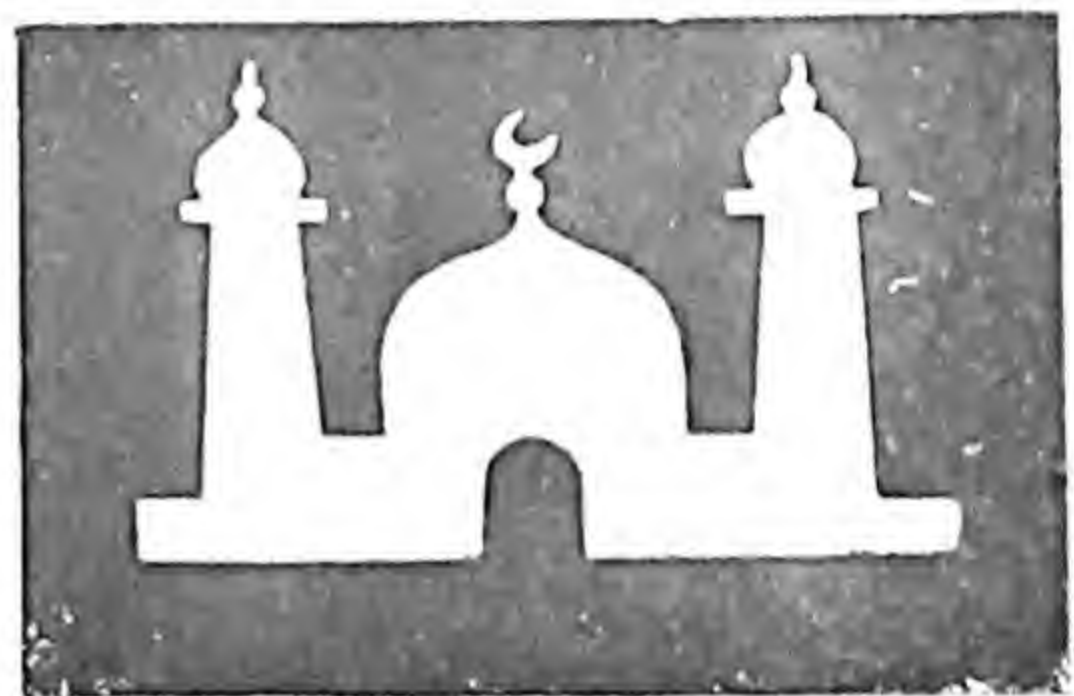
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560-1320 A.D.



MUSLIM PERIOD
1320-1586 A.D.



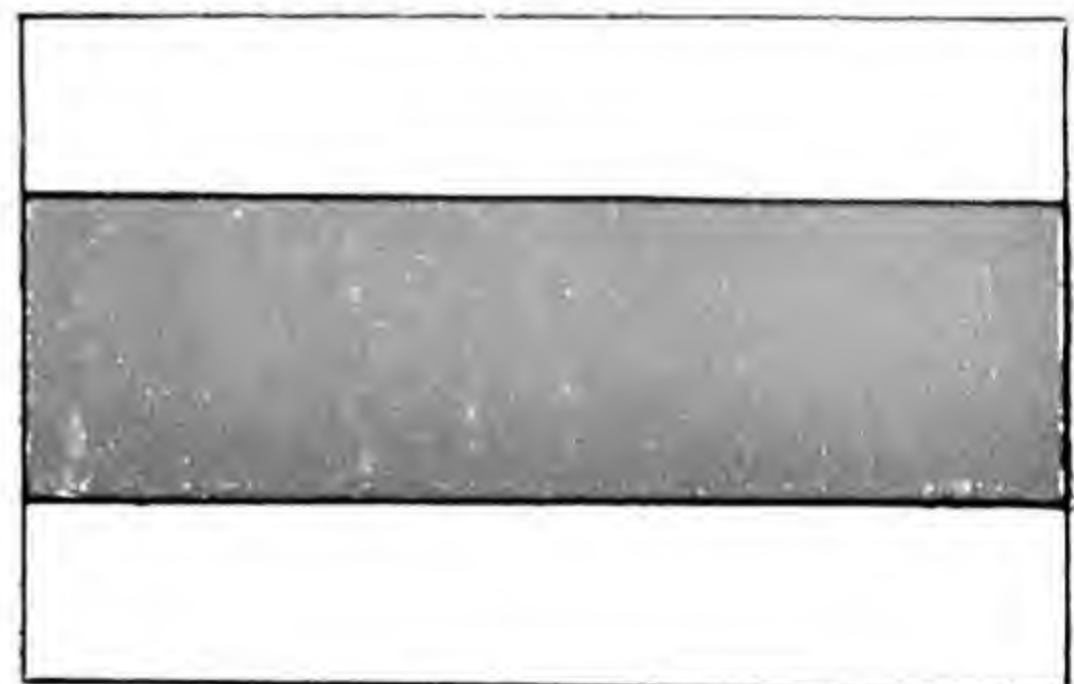
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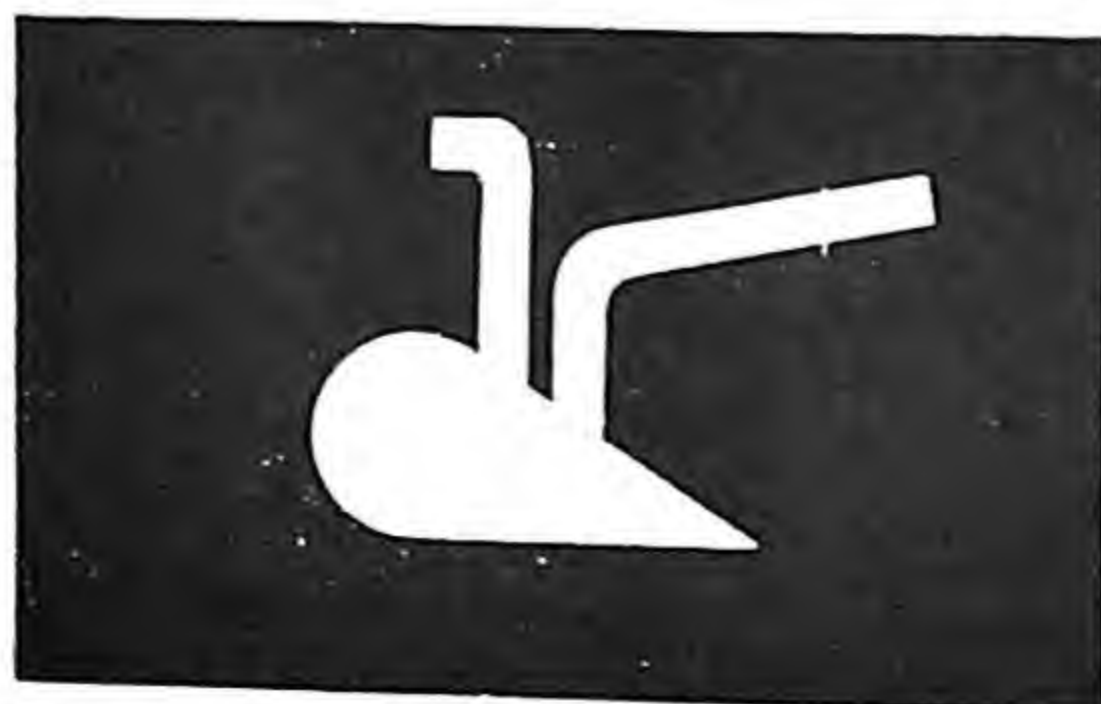
AFGHAN PERIOD
1752-1819 A.D.



SIKH PERIOD
1819-1846 A.D.



DOGRA PERIOD
1846-1947 A.D.



NATIONAL CONFERENCE
21st Oct 1931

CHAPTER 2

EARLY HISTORY

Kashmir can claim the distinction of being the only region in the subcontinent of India which possesses an uninterrupted series of written records of its history. These chronicles testify to the continued existence, among the population of the Valley, of a genuine historical sense in which the Indian mind on the whole is so conspicuously deficient. Kalhana, poet-historian of Kashmir wrote his *Rajatarangini* 200 years before Chaucer and more than 400 years before Shakespeare. It narrates in Sanskrit verse the history of the various dynasties which ruled Kashmir from the earliest period down to the time of the author who began to write this work in 1148 A.D. Allowing for a mixture of legend and myth pervading the description of earliest dynasties, we retain in Kalhana's work a connected account of Kashmir history which has well stood the test of historical criticism. It can be accepted as a reliable record from the seventh century onwards.

Kalhana's work was continued by Jonaraja whose narrative covers the troubled times of the last Hindu dynasties of Kashmir and also the first Muslim rulers to the time of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, who ascended the throne in 1420 A.D.

The legends tell us that the Valley of Kashmir was filled by a lake in which lived a horrible amphibious demon which terrorised the whole area until the Hindu god Vishnu came to the rescue of people. Vishnu struck the mountains near the town of Baramulla, with his trident, the rocks cracked open and the lake waters rushed out. The demon was subsequently crushed to death under the Hariparbat hill. The inhabitants of the Valley, the legends tell us, were at last able to live in peace.

In archaeological terms, no palaeolithic tool has as yet been found from the Valley and human occupation in

Pleistocene Kashmir has still to be proved. While the evidence of palaeolithic life is missing, the Valley contains remains of a full-fledged neolithic culture. From explorations done so far, traces of neolithic settlement have been observed at a number of places. Besides, Burzahama - about 16 kilometres from Srinagar, has yielded remains of a flourishing neolithic life. The excavations have brought to light four cultural periods. The people of the first period lived in pits which were cut below the ground level into the natural soil. They used handmade pottery consisting of bowls and vases. The bone and stone tools, used by people, included needles, arrow heads, daggers, axes, picks, chisels and pounders. The second period is characterised by structures made of mud or mud bricks as well as timber. The most distinctive feature of this period, which is not to be found anywhere else in contemporary India, was the peculiar burials. The dead and their pet animals were placed in oval pits, mostly dug into the housefloors or compounds. The third period, associated with the Megalithic Age, saw the use of wheel-made pottery and metallic tools. The fourth period is ascribed to the historical period. Dated a little earlier than the third century A.D., mudbrick structures and metallic objects predominated during this period.

The earliest date ascribed to Burzahama is 2400 B.C. The identity of people of this period is still wrapped in speculation. But these neolithic people are, from the archaeological evidences so far worked out, the earliest known inhabitants of the Valley.

Kalhana's narrative reveals that the Nagas were the aborigines of the Valley. They were a tribal people devoted to agriculture. They were worshippers of serpent-deities. The snake-cult seems to have been established in the Valley from a remote period and undoubtedly had been one of the earliest religions of the land. A large number of temples built near some of the famous springs of the Valley clearly manifest the popularity of the serpent-deities in ancient Kashmir. The snake cult prevalent in the Valley throughout the Hindu rule and even afterwards is corroborated by Abul Fazl, a

courtier of the Mughal Emperor, Akbar who visited Kashmir at the fag end of the 16th century. Abul Fazl records that there were 700 places in the Valley bearing carved images of snakes which the inhabitants worshipped. Even now, names of places like Nilnag, Verinag, Anantnag and Sernag show traces of ancient Naga beliefs which continue to be venerated to this day.

Entry of the Aryans into the Valley, nearly 3000 years ago, represents the first massive cultural invasion of Kashmir. Sanskrit and caste system were introduced into the land. The Aryans mixed with the aborigines and formed one people. The Kashmiri language is of Dardic origin, which in turn is an offshoot of the Aryan stock. The Aryans who infiltrated into Kashmir from Gilgit and Chitral are identified with Pisacas, the ancestors of the Dard-speaking tribes. Nilamatapurana, the 7th century literary product of the Valley testifies that Pisacas followed the Nagas as dwellers of ancient Kashmir. The great majority of present day Kashmiris, consists of the descendants of Dard-speaking peoples, who have been able to preserve their racial purity to a considerable extent inspite of many foreign incursions and invasions.

According to Kalhana, there ruled in Kashmir, in the earliest times, fifty two kings. The names of only four kings are preserved in the chronicles. The first recorded king of Kashmir is Gonanda I. He was followed by his son, Damodara I, Yasovati-Damodara's wife and the latter's son Gonanda II. Another thirty five kings followed Gonanda II whose names and deeds, according to Kalhana, perished through the destruction of records. However, the famous 19th century Kashmiri historian, Hassan has reconstructed the names and duration of reign of these 35 kings. The ever-green romance of Heemal and Nagrai is a contribution of Nagas to our literary culture. They are believed to have lived during the reign of these kings.

The next lot of kings recorded by Kalhana are:- Lava, Kusa, Khangendra, Surendra, Godhara, Survarna, Janaka and Sacinara. The fist four are believed to have belonged to one

dynasty and the last four to another. It is said that these kings granted estates to Brahmans; a few of them built towns and one of them excavated a canal. Nothing, however, is known about the historicity of any of them.

The first known historical name, to appear in the *Rajatarangini*, is Ashoka, the great Mauryan King whose empire extended from the Hindukush in the west to Bengal in the east and down to Mysore in the south. Ashoka built the first city of Srinagar at Pandrethan in 250 B.C.

Chandra Gupta Maurya, Ashoka's grandfather had included Kashmir in his empire. The entry of Mauryan kings into Kashmir represents a great historical landmark in the annals of this land. For the first time, in recorded history, an Indian ruling dynasty's empire included Kashmir. The Kashmiris were part of the Mauryan army which invaded Raja Mahapadam Nand of Magdha (present day Bihar) in the 4th century B.C.

At the time of Ashoka's succession to the throne, the Brahmanical cult, with its tyrannical caste system, ritualism, priestcraft, sorcery, witchcraft, superstition and image-worship, was rife. At this juncture, the revolutionary message of the Scythian prince, the great Buddha, was ushered into Kashmir. "All human beings are equal and salvation is equally open to all." Ashoka sent Majjhantika, a missionary from Varanasi, along with 10,000 Buddhist monks to disseminate the democratic and egalitarian message of the Buddhist creed in Kashmir.

In the history of Buddhism, Kashmir has an eminent place. Ever since its introduction, Buddhism continued to flourish and the creed enjoyed considerable popularity in the Valley for nearly 900 years. Ashoka who reigned from 269-232 BC, constructed many monasteries and sacred cupulos for preservation of relics. The monasteries in Kashmir became great centres of Buddhist study and research and attracted a large number of local and foreign celebrities and scholars. The Kashmiri scholars not only played a leading role in expounding Buddhism to China, Central Asia, Tibet but also

translated Sanskrit works on Buddhism into Chinese language. Ashoka established friendly relations with Greece, Egypt and West Asia. The introduction of stone architecture and sculpture in the Valley, replacing wood and stucco, was a consequence of Kashmir's intercourse with the outside world.

Ashoka was succeeded by Jaluka. He was a Shaivite and settled many Brahmans, of the Indo-gangetic plain, in Kashmir. Damodara II, another supporter of Shaivism, took over from Jaluka and founded his capital on the Damodhar Udar, which is the site of the present Srinagar airport.

The downfall of the Mauryas, after Asoka's death, was followed by the domination of Bactrian Greeks in Kashmir. Following Alexander's death, Seleucus, one of his generals, got possession of western Asia, Persia and Mesopotamia. His grandson could not hold the empire together, resulting in declaration of independence by the local governors of Bactria and Parthia. Bactria was the part of Seleucus' empire situated between the Hindukush and the present Kabul city. The Bactrian Greeks were routed by the invading Scythians and consequently moved into the green pastures of Kashmir. The Bactrian Greeks enjoyed suzerain power over southern Kashmir for about 200 years and left impress of their rule on Kashmir's architecture. Demetrius was their famous ruler in Kashmir.

The next horde of invaders into Kashmir were the Scythians, the Turki nomads, who were pushed out from their homes in Central Asia by the more powerful tribe of Kushans. The people of Baltistan are supposed to be the descendants of the Scythians. The Bactrian Greeks and the Scythians were devout Buddhists.

The Scythians in Kashmir and its surrounding areas were overwhelmed, in the 1st century B.C., by the Kushans who had themselves been uprooted from Sinkiang by other powerful tribes. Kanishka was the greatest among the Kushan kings. The Kushan Empire, which included Kashmir, extended from Khotan and Kashgar in the north, borders of Persia and Parthia in the west and to Benaras

in the east and the Vindhya mountains in the south. This empire lasted for nearly 300 years, with Peshawar as its capital. It was a Buddhist empire and marked the golden period of Buddhism in Kashmir. Kanishka founded the town of Kanispur in the neighbourhood of Baramulla and erected a number of monasteries and monuments in Kashmir. Under his patronage, the 4th great Buddhist Council was held in Kashmir around 100 A.D under the presidency of Nagarjuna, a celebrated Buddhist scholar and theoretician. The Council sat for months to sort out the theories, edicts and dictums of various schools of Buddhist thought. The voluminous expository commentaries were written in Sanskrit and were inscribed on copper plates and consigned to sacred cupulos under the earth at an hitherto unknown place in the Valley of Kashmir. A great fortune awaits some lucky archaeologist some day!

A dozen local rulers are said to have succeeded the Kushans, around the beginning of the 3rd century A.D. The first of these rulers was Abhimanyu, who founded the village of Bemina, lying on the outskirts of the present day city of Srinagar. The king was a promoter of Sanskrit learning and a supporter of Shaivism. He is the earliest known king of Kashmir who moved down during winter months to the warm regions of Poonch and Rajouri. Abhimanyu was succeeded by Gonanda III, the founder of his dynasty. They revived Brahmanism. King Nara, the sixth in the line of succession was a slave of many vices. He burnt down thousands of monasteries, persecuted the Buddhists and granted their lands to Brahmans. Thus starts the inexorable story of decline of Buddhism in Kashmir.

White Huns, originally nomads from Sinkiang, invaded India successfully towards the end of 5th century A.D. They established their empire in Afghanistan and western India. Mihirakula, a notorious Hun king and an unmitigated savage, succeeded in 510 A.D and established Sialkot as his capital. He has been described as a scourge of God on earth who killed thousands of people without any remorse. His revolting acts of cruelty became so abhorrent that the kings of Magadha and of Central India inflicted

a decisive defeat on him. Instead of killing him, the kind victors exiled him, along with his supporters, to Kashmir. The local king received him kindly and offered the fugitives a small territory. Mihirakula repaid the king's kindness by treacherously seizing his throne in 528 A.D. The deposed king was executed. Then issuing from Kashmir, Mihirakula conquered Afghanistan and north-west India. He drowned multitudes of people into the river Indus. Kalhana depicts him in the blackest colours of cruelty and his sadism is perhaps unequalled. People in Kashmir still point to a ridge, Hastivang, on the Pirpanjal range, where Mihirakula forced one hundred elephants down the precipice to amuse himself with their cries of agony. He was a Shaivite and invited Brahmans from the north-western India to settle in Kashmir. Mihirakula patronised the Brahmans, revived their customs and traditions and bestowed lands on them. He tortured the peaceful Buddhists mercilessly and plundered and destroyed their monasteries. He committed suicide in 550 AD, overpowered probably by the sense of his own misdeeds.

Following the death of Mihirakula and upto the accession of Karkota dynasty in 627, twenty five kings ruled over Kashmir. But only four of them merit our attention. Gopaditya built the temple of Shankaracharya in Srinagar and enforced strict observance of Brahmanical ritual. He invited Brahmans from the Indo-Gangetic plain and granted them lands. King Tunjina was a patron of learning and fine arts. Kalhana gives a graphic account of the terrible famine in Tujina's reign. Such was the general distress that "modesty and pride, family honour and public respect were all forgotten; the love of parent and child, of husband and wife, no longer prevailed; although reduced to bones, the famished skeletons fought with fury for the carcasses of the dead." King Matrigupta, identified by some scholars with the famous Sanskrit poet and dramatist Kalidasa, assumed the throne of Kashmir through the help of king Harsa of Ujjain. He patronised art and literature. King Praverasena laid out the city of Srinagar on the banks of river Jehlum and raised many palaces and temples in the city.

With the accession of the Karkota dynasty in 627 AD, the history of Kashmir becomes factual. From now onwards, Kalhana's story is corroborated by accounts of foreign travellers and numismatic evidence. Durlabhavardhana, the first ruler of the Karkota dynasty succeeded Baladitya, the last ruler of the Gonanda family and reigned from 627 to 663 AD. Hiuen Tsiang, the famous Chinese pilgrim spent two years in Kashmir (631-633 AD) and has given an elaborate description of the land and its people. He describes Kashmiris thus :- "light and frivolous and of a weak, pusillanimous disposition; people are handsome in appearance but they are given to cunning. They love learning and are well instructed." In his accounts, the Buddhist traveller says that the beautiful valley of Kashmir produces abundant fruit and flowers, saffron and some medicinal plants. "The country was prosperous and peaceful. There were one hundred monasteries, four halls full of the relics of Buddha and about five thousand Buddhist monks but people were inclined to the temples of the heretics." King Durlabhavardha died in 663 AD and was followed successively by Pratapaditya, Candrapida and Tarapida.

Lalitaditya (724-760 AD) was the greatest king of the Karkota dynasty who lifted his country to the pinnacle of fame. He was a soldier-king who routed the king of Kanauj in the Indo-Gangetic plain; annexed the adjoining areas of Punjab, Kangra, Baltistan, Dardistan, Ladakh and big chunks of Central Asia and eastern Afghanistan. When Lalitaditya was not marching, he was building and it is for the great temple at Martand that he is remembered the most. The temple was built on a plateau above the present day town of Mattan, nearly 65 kilometres from Srinagar. Earthquakes and fires have reduced Martand to ruins but nonetheless it is still most impressive, and in its prime it must have been breathtaking. Its architecture and site denote clear influence of Greeks on Kashmir, via Bactria and Parthia. Francis Younghusband, the British Resident in Kashmir at the beginning of this century comments:- "No temple was ever built on a finer site. It is one of the most heavenly spots on

earth.... there is about it a combination of massiveness and simplicity and of solidity combined with grace, which has earned it fame for a thousand years.”

Lalitaditya built his capital on an alluvial plateau at Parihaspore, 25 kilometres north-west of Srinagar, in the vicinity of Shadipore. Of this celebrated city of magnificent lime-stone edifices embellished with lavish decorations, which Kalhana describes with awe, unfortunately only 3 crumbled ruins remain. These are all Buddhist ruins- a royal monastery, relic structure within an assembly hall and a sacred cupola for preservation of relics.

Lalitaditya is also remembered for his qualities as a champion of justice, able administrator, promoter of literary and creative activities and for his patronage of arts.

Fearing an attack both from Tibet and the Arabs, Lalitaditya sent an ambassador to China in 733 AD to seek military help. The Chinese did not oblige. Instead, they extended their suzerainty over Kashmir and the foreign policy of the kingdom began to be governed by the Chinese.

Junayd, who had succeeded the famous Arab commander Muhammad Bin Qasim, as governor of Sindh, attempted an invasion of Kashmir in 733 AD but was effectively repulsed by Lalitaditya. This is the first time Kalhana refers to Muslims in his *Rajatarangini*. Lalitaditya's successors repulsed another Arab invasion from Sindh led by Hisham-al-Taghlibi in 770 AD.

Lalitaditya was followed by a dozen Karkota kings, only two of whom deserve a mention. Vajraditya, the great Lalitaditya's son, sold his subjects to Muslims and adopted their culture and civilisation. It may be mentioned here that a Muslim colony had already developed in the Malchamar area of Alikadal, Srinagar.

Lalitaditya's grandson, Jayapida founded the town of Andarkot, near the Mansbal Lake. He conquered the Indo-Gangetic plain. He was a liberal patron of learning and many writers, scholars and poets adorned his court. Kalhana portrays his unique

personality - queer mixture of opposites, brave to the point of recklessness, learned and promoter of learning on the one hand and cruel, avaracious and scant respecter of public opinion on the other. While the early years of Jayapida's reign promised the same palmy days as those of his grandfather, the later years contributed towards the unpopularity and downfall of the Karkotas.

A series of pleasure-seeking puppet kings who followed Jayapida were given to intrigues, jealousies and tyranny. They plunged the kingdom into utter political and economic chaos. The vast dominions earned at great costs of men and material outside Kashmir were lost and people were reduced to misery. The Karkota dynasty came to an ignoble end after having guided the destiny of Kashmir for more than two-and-a half centuries. The Valley did not ever rise to such heights of glory as under Lalitaditya and never before or since did the empire reach upto such extents in territories. It was the supreme power in northern India and even the Indo-Gangetic plain had to submit twice before its might. Diplomatic relations between Kashmir and China were cemented to contain the growing power of Tibetans in the east and of the Arabs in the west.

Following the downfall of the Karkota dynasty, arrived the descendants of spirit-distillers, the Utpala dynasty. The most remarkable king of this dynasty was Avantivarman (855-883 AD). He waged no wars, not even to regain control over the territories which his predecessors had lost not long ago. Kalhana describes him as a gentle and humane man whose first act on becoming king was to give the previous ruler's ill-gotten treasure to the poor- 'for who could delight in necklaces cursed and unholy, which have been torn from the necks of the dying.' Scholars, artists and poets received 'great fortunes and high honours' and consequently flocked back to court. Two fine temples were built at the king's new town of Avantipur, about 25 kilometres from Srinagar. As at Martand, temple buildings have been ravaged by time, earthquakes and vandals but their gateways, paved quadrangles and general lay out can be seen clearly. Even though in ruins, these monuments reflect ancient Kashmir's

architecture in its most glorious phase.

The real star of Avantivarman's reign was an engineer called Suyya, who organised the irrigation and drainage system for the Valley. Year after year there were devastating floods in the kingdom with consequent famines and epidemics, until Suyya cleared the rocks and silt that were clogging the outlet of the Jehlum and the water drained away. Suyya built massive stone embankments to contain the Jehlum waters and is even supposed to have moved the site of the confluence of the Jehlum and its tributary, the Sind from the town of Parihaspora to Shadipur. As a consequence, agriculture prospered and it proved a stabilising factor in Kashmir politics. Suyya was rewarded by letting him build his own town on the banks of the river he had tamed. This is the modern town of Sopore.

Prior to Avantivarman's accession, Damaras, the powerful feudal barons of Kashmir had amassed huge fortunes and forcibly usurped lands. They had become aggressive and created private armies to protect their ill-gotten wealth and power. They were greatly subdued by Sura, the chief minister of Avantivarman.

Avantivarman bequeathed to his son and successor, Sankaravarman, a settled and prosperous state. It enabled him to reassert the sovereignty of Kashmir and his dream was the establishment of a Pan-Kashmiri kingdom akin to that of Lalitaditya. He subdued Kangra, Gujrat and Hazara but his accumulated resources were exhausted before he could complete his scheme of conquests. Under the circumstances, he was compelled to overtax his subjects. He also robbed the temples of their wealth and introduced the most hated system of forced labour. He died in 902 AD in the course of a military expedition to Hazara. Sankaravarman is remembered by the temples of Pattan, about 25 kilometres north of Srinagar.

The political history of Kashmir after Sankaravarman's death is a sordid tale of profligacy, jealousies, intrigues and internecine conflicts. The proper working of government was prevented by the presence of a number of claimants to the throne and

their mutual rivalries. The impotency of the authority was fully exploited by three mutually antagonistic armed groups which traced their origin to the communities of soldiers and peasants. These groups were known as Damaras, Tantrins and Ekangas. They were a rude, restless and troublesome people who held the crown as a pawn. The pretenders to the throne were anxious to purchase the favour of these armed groups and no sooner had one succeeded in winning them over than it was snatched away by another who had paid a higher price for it. Nothing was considered too high for the price of the crown and to attain it, R.C.Kak, a former prime minister of Kashmir says, 'kings squandered their revenues, queens bartered their honour, the son intrigued against his father and the father set assassins upon his offspring- all lost their sense of truth and dignity for the acquisition, howsoever temporary, of the fatal reward.'

During these turbulent times of civil strife Sankaravarman's wife, Sugandha, the first historical woman ruler of Kashmir ascended the throne by popular choice. She was a woman of easy virtue and became the victim of internecine quarrels among the restless armed militants and was put to death in 914 AD.

The Valley witnessed one of its worst famines in 917 AD. Thousands of people died for want of food; prices rose sky high; corpses were thrown into the Jehlum. Even in this catastrophe, officials resorted to blackmarketing and hoarding of foodgrains thereby adding enormous miseries to an already miserable people. The Utpala dynasty came to an inglorious end in 939 AD.

Yasaskara, a commoner was elected as the king of Kashmir, by an assembly of Brahmans. His reign (939-948) was devoid of disturbances. Agriculture and education were encouraged; bribery and corruption were controlled. According to Kalhana, astrologers, physicians, ministers, judges and teachers were required to have a high degree of proficiency in their fields. The king granted 55 villages on the left bank of Jehlum to the Brahmans. He enforced the caste system rigorously. He fell in love with a low caste woman and elevated her to the status of the chief queen. The queen

repaid him by committing adultery with a low caste servant. Yasaskara became disinterested in statecraft. The once-famous infantry regiments of the Valley which had a distinguished record in the defence of the country fell into disrepute and finally came to the point of virtual extinction.

Kshemagupta ascended the throne in 950 AD. He was a gambler, drunkard and a licentious ruler. He was surrounded by 'harlots, knaves, imbeciles and corrupters of boys.' There was no place for high minded men, scholars or thinkers in the king's court. He used to spit on the beards of venerable men and poured abuses into their ears and blows on their skulls. The king burnt down many Buddhist monasteries.

Historically the most interesting feature of Kshemagupta was his marriage with Didda. She was the daughter of the king of Poonch and her maternal grandfather was the Shahi King of Kabul. She strode the political stage of Kashmir for more than half a century - first as the influential queen-consort, then as regent for her son and after his death for her three grandsons and after eliminating them all, without remorse or compassion, by witchcraft and torture, she ascended the throne herself in 980 AD without any hindrance. She was a remarkable woman with a fair share of good looks, tact, courage and political sagacity. She came to the throne at a critical time. The greedy Brahmans, unscrupulous landholders and conspiring nobles had all joined their hands to oust her. By bribing some and cajoling others, by wise and discriminating distribution of wealth and favour, she drove the enemy and won the opponent. The most serious flaw of Didda was her moral laxity, her lameness notwithstanding. 'The ministers, officials and the royal servants visited the queen's bedroom without any scruples'. The 'nobles' seized the opportunity and for their easy advancement began to act as procurers for the queen.

It was in such a mood of idle enjoyment that Didda met a buffalo-herdsman of Poonch, named Tunga who secured the twin jobs of a royal courier and the queen's paramour! Tunga was soon

elevated to the job of army chief and prime minister, for the services he rendered to Didda.

As a final proof of her statesmanship Didda peacefully passed on the throne of Kashmir in 1003 AD to her nephew, Samgramaraja, who became the founder of Rajput dynasty. Tunga retained the job of prime minister which upset the Brahmans, who resorted to hunger strikes in protest. Tunga restored peace by acting sternly against the Brahmans and as a reprisal cut down the maintenance allowance of 'gods, cows, Brahmans, orphans and the guests'.

The eleventh century witnessed 17 Turkish invasions, led by Mahmud Ghazni, upon Hindu kingdoms of northern India. Mahmud had included Kashmir in the scheme of his Indian campaigns with a view to punishing Samgramaraja who was related to and an ally of the Shahi dynasty of Kabul. 'No part of India remained unconquered except Kashmir and Mahmud resolved on an expedition to that country.'

Mahmud invaded Kashmir twice through Poonch in order to penetrate into the Valley via the Tosamaidan pass. His progress was checked at the Poonch fort and he returned unsuccessful in the first attempt. He invaded Kashmir for the second time in 1021 AD. Man and nature conspired against the invader and the heavy snowfall forced Mahmud to finally abandon his Kashmir adventure.

After Hariraja, son of Samgramaraja, was killed by his licentious mother, Ananta, the younger son ascended the throne in 1028 AD. He was faced by an armed uprising of the Damaras, the feudal barons, whom he promptly subdued. He beat back the combined attack of the rajas of Poonch and Chamba. Next came the invasion of the Muslim ruler of Dardistan who was supported by seven Scythian Muslim tribal chiefs living on the frontiers of Kashmir but Ananta repulsed them too. In spite of Ananta's resistance against successive Muslim incursions into Kashmir, Islamic influence became marked in his reign (1028-1063 A.D.). Ananta's extravagant habits landed him in financial mess and he nearly mortgaged his

throne and crown for the debts he had incurred. He abdicated the throne in 1063 A.D in favour of his son Kalsa, under the pressure of his wife. Ananta and his wife soon came to regret their decision on account of Kalsa's debauchery and his cruelty towards them. Ananta rebuking his wife said, "pride, honour, valour, royal dignity, power, intellect and riches have forsaken me by following your advice." He further flung in her face the charge that Kalsa was not his legitimate son; that he was substituted by her when her own child had died soon after his birth. Completely heart-broken, Ananta committed suicide and his wife committed Sati. Kalsa's licentiousness, encouraged by Brahman procurers, degenerated into incestuous relationships with his aunts, nieces and daughters-in-law. His harem contained 72 women.

On the military front, Kalsa was able to reduce to submission eight of the adjoining hill states of Hazara, Chamba, Ballavar, Rajouri, Poonch, Bhadarwah, Kishtwar and Kangra.

Kalsa was succeeded by his remarkable son, Harsha in 1089 A.D. He was handsome, courageous and an ostentatious Hindu monarch. He patronised dancing, poetry, art and literature. For the first time in Kashmir history, nearly five centuries before Emperor Jehangir, Harsha set up bells of justice in the four corners of the palace to deal prompt and even-handed justice. To decrease crime, he used punishments like cutting off ears and noses of criminals so that they could not conceal their identity in future. He maintained a splendid court and encouraged sartorial elegance. Wearing of turban, hitherto, the privilege of the king, was encouraged in his court; wearing of gold chains and bracelets became common; women used gorgeous dresses and fabulous ornaments. Harsha employed a number of Muslims in his army.

Harsha plundered the temples and desecrated the statues of gods and goddesses and truly became an iconoclast. His extravagant habits impoverished the royal treasury compelling him, as a consequence, to impose all sorts of taxes on people. 'He did not spare even night-soil from taxation'. The landed aristocracy, the

Damaras, were severely punished and they sought refuge in the neighbouring Muslim lands where they 'ate cow's meat'. To add to the misfortune of people, an epidemic of plague broke out in the country in 1100 AD, followed by floods and famine.

Guided by evil counsellors, Harsha began to excel in all kinds of sins and crimes conceivable to man. He placed in his seraglio 360 concubines but not satisfied with that, he committed incest with his father's wives and his own sisters. Summing up the king's oppression and cruelties, Kalhana says:- "In the form of Harsha some demon had descended on earth to destroy this land hallowed by gods".

The chaotic conditions in the kingdom bred conspiracies within. When Harsha's nephews, Ucchala and Sussala raised the standard of revolt, all flocked to it. The palace was burnt down; the queens were burnt to death; the heir-apparent was killed. Harsha was beheaded in 1101 AD. and was cremated by a compassionate wood-cutter.

The history of Kashmir after the death of Harsha is a record of murders, suicides, fear of poisoning, conspiracies, rebellions and oppression. With Harsha's departure, Ucchala usurped the throne. He turned his attention to cleanse the corrupt administration. The king is credited with the view that "besides cholera which ends in sudden death, it is the unscrupulous officials who are the sources of speedy destruction of the subjects." Ucchala considered himself as the first servant of the State and devoted his entire energy to the service of his subjects. He administered justice in an even-handed manner and like Caliph Haroon Rashid of Baghdad, moved among his subjects incognito, hearing their grievances and redressing them as far as possible. The corrupt officials, however, conspired against the king and brutally murdered him in 1111 A.D. and even looted the queen of her ornaments before she jumped into her husband's funeral pyre.

Sussala who followed as the king reigned until 1128 A.D. He 'brought suffering to all - through sorrows, terrors, poverty,

death of beloved persons and other calamities.' The poor king had an inglorious end; he could not even get a decent cremation, his severed trunk having been carried off by the assassins. He was succeeded by his son, Jayasimha.

Jayasimha is the last known Hindu ruler of Kashmir who possessed political acumen and diplomatic skill. He tried to sort out the enormous political and economic problems which he had inherited from his father's misrule. He successfully beat back a combined invasion of Dards and Damaras. Kalhana, the author of *Rajatarangini* was Jayasimha's court poet and he completed the story of kings of Kashmir until 1150 A.D. Jayasimha's death in 1155 A.D. ushered in the gradual process of decline and disintegration of the Hindu rule over Kashmir.

After Jayasimha's death, eleven kings occupied the throne of Kashmir until 1319 A.D. This period of 165 years was characterised by anarchy; the kings were mere puppets and knaves. The kingdom was at the mercy of selfish and disloyal feudal lords. In the reigns of Simhadeva and Suhadeva (1286-1319 A.D.), Kashmir was a country of "drunkards and gamblers". During Suhadeva's reign, a Muslim adventurer called Shahmir migrated to Kashmir. He is believed to be of either Iranian or Turki origin. A brave soldier, Shahmir helped the king in extending his authority throughout the length and breadth of Kashmir. Soon afterwards, a hardy youth named Rinchan, a Ladakhi Buddhist princeling, sought political refuge in Kashmir. He had fled from Ladakh after avenging his father's murder at the hands of the Baltis. He was gifted with great energy, drive and an uncommon intellect. Shahmir and Rinchan met for the first time at Lar, Ganderbal and the two were destined to mould Kashmir history indelibly.

The rule of Suhadeva closed with great disaster, with the invasion of Dulacha, a Mongol marauder. Dulacha, adherent of paganism, invaded Kashmir around 1320 A.D. through the Jehlum valley route. Kashmir became the victim of unprecedented vandalism. Villages, towns and the city of Srinagar were burnt down.

People irrespective of age and sex were butchered mercilessly and those who had fled to the hills and forests were pursued and done to death. Dulacha trampled upon Kashmir ruthlessly. The chicken-hearted king, Suhadeva fled to Kishtwar, his brother Udendev fled to Swat valley and the prime minister, Ramachandra shut himself up in his castle at Lar, Ganderbal.

Dulacha's ravages went on for about 8 months. With the approach of winter, alongwith 50,000 of Kashmiri prisoners, Dulacha took the return route via the Banihal pass, where a terrible blizzard devoured both the marauders and the prisoners. In reference to this holocaust, there is still a saying among the Kashmiris that, "once upon a time, only 11 families were spared".

With the departure of Dulacha, Kashmir presented the sad picture of anarchy, chaos, confusion, disorder, destruction and despondency. Rinchan occupied the vacant throne of Kashmir on 6th October, 1320, after murdering prime minister Ramachandran, his potential rival to the throne. Ramachandran was survived by two children - a daughter named KotaRani and a son called Rawan. Rinchan married KotaRani and appointed Rawan as his commander-in-chief. The prime minister's job went to Shahmir. Under the influence of a Muslim mystic of Turkistan, Bulbul Shah, who had arrived in Kashmir during Suhadeva's reign, Rinchan hitherto a Buddhist, embraced Islam. He adopted the name of Sultan Sadrudin - the first Muslim ruler of Kashmir.

Rinchan quickly restored law and order and attended to the welfare of his subjects. He spared none, "whether son, minister or friend," who interfered with justice. People of Kashmir witnessed, once again, all the festivities which they had known under their former kings. He built the first mosque of Kashmir, the Rinchan Mosque, in the Alikadal area of Srinagar and also established a public charity kitchen which became familiar later on as Bulbul Langar, in the memory of his religious mentor, Bulbul Shah.

Udendeva, brother of the fugitive Hindu King Suhadeva, conspired against Rinchan who was attacked, wounded

and he eventually died in November, 1323. He was buried at Bulbul Langar, beside the tomb of Bulbul Shah.

Consequent upon Rinchan's death, Kashmir returned to Hindu rule under Udendeva. He married KotaRani, the widow of Rinchan. Kashmir became the victim of yet another invasion. It was led by Achala, a Turko-Mongol soldier of fortune who entered the Valley via the Mughal route. The king fled to Ladakh, leaving the defence of the country to KotaRani and Shahmir who valiantly beat back the invader. Udendeva shamelessly returned and reoccupied the throne. Shahmir's heroic role during the invasion won him fame and peoples affection. Historian Jonaraja comments thus:- "Strange that this believer in Allah became the saviour of people. As a dried up river allows men to cross it and gives them shelter on its banks, even so this believer in Allah, calm and active, protected the terrified subjects". Shahmir identified himself fully with the people of Kashmir and entered into matrimonial alliances with the feudal barons. His power and prestige became extraordinary and he became a national hero.

Following Udendeva's death in 1338, KotaRani ascended the throne, overlooking the claims of her two sons (Haider by Rinchan and Jatta by Udendeva). She moved her capital to Anderkot, near the famous Mansbal Lake and ignoring Shahmir, appointed Bhatta Bhikshana, a Brahman, as her chief advisor. This proved to be the last straw for Shahmir who got Bhatta Bhikshana assassinated and subsequently sought KotaRani's surrender after the siege of Andarkot. Shahmir proclaimed himself the king in 1339 under the title of Sultan Shams-ud-Din. He married KotaRani but she committed suicide within 24 hours of their marriage. Thus, ends the saga of the rule of Hindu kings of Kashmir. The main reasons of the downfall of Hindu kings include the following:- anarchy of nearly 200 years, wicked rajas, vicious ranis, unpardonable moral depravity of rulers, corrupt officials, neglect of the army owing to a false sense of security from the natural barriers of the country, intrigues, rebellions, puppet rulers, powerful self-seeking and unscrupulous

ministers, irresponsible feudal barons, forced labour and impoverishment of people.

Before concluding the account of early history of Kashmir, it is appropriate to review the fate of Buddhism in Kashmir. Buddhism was ushered into the country during Ashoka's reign. The new creed became instantly popular because of its egalitarian ethos. It continued to receive royal patronage during the Kushan rule which marked the heyday of Buddhism in Kashmir. With the growing popularity of Buddhism in its pristine purity, Brahmins panicked as the new creed challenged everything that Brahmanical cult represented. Nagarjuna, in the first century A.D. utilised all his means, both of learning and position, to spread Buddhism. He defeated in arguments the pandits who advocated the worship of Shiva. Buddha's message was essentially a revolt against ritualism and the tyranny of the priestly order. Buddha did not approve of image-worship. He did not claim to be a god to be worshipped. He had proclaimed to be the Enlightened one. In accordance with this ideology, Buddha was not represented in images. But Brahmins succeeded in corrupting Buddhism by introducing Hindu ideas of magic, witchcraft and sorcery into the Buddhist thought. Buddhism and Hinduism became indistinguishable. Craftsmen were employed to make images of Buddha's previous incarnations and subsequently of Buddha himself and the same were placed in monasteries for worship. Some bigoted Hindu kings like Nara, Abhimanyu, Mihirakula, Samkaravarman and Ksemgupta persecuted the Buddhists, massacred the monks, plundered and burnt down monasteries and utilized the stone material of monasteries for construction of temples.

The Indian Hindu missionaries like Shankaracharya, Abhinava Gupta and Kumarila Bhatt campaigned vigorously against Buddhism in Kashmir. The Advaita Shaivism of Kashmir developed in response to the formidable Buddhist challenge. The decline of Buddhism in Kashmir started around 6th century A.D. The

monks led a life of worldly comforts and lost high ideals of morality. All the factors detailed above conspired to banish Buddhism from Kashmir.

CHAPTER 3

THE SULTANS OF KASHMIR

The dramatic change from Hinduism to Islam in Kashmir occurred calmly, peacefully, by conviction and conversion rather than by bloody conquest. In the early eighth century the Arabs after their conquest of Sindh and Southern Punjab, turned their attention towards Kashmir. The Hindu kings, Candrapida and Lalitaditya, in the early eighth century, successfully repulsed the Arab attempts to conquer Kashmir. However, the Arab conquest of Sindh profoundly affected Kashmir in an indirect way - it brought for the first time the people of Kashmir and the followers of Islam in contact with each other. After Raja Dahir of Sindh was defeated by the Arabs, his son Jaisiya took refuge in Kashmir. He was accompanied by a Syrian Muslim named Hamim who is said to be the first Muslim who set his feet on the soil of Kashmir. Hamim soon began to propagate his faith among his acquaintances and friends, resulting in intimate contacts between the people of Kashmir and the followers of Islam. King Vajraditya (754-761 AD) gave Hamim and his co-religionists a colony to settle in. This was called Malchamar. To this day, this colony in the Alikadal area of Srinagar is known by the same name. Kalhana records that Vajraditya 'sold many men to the Muslims and introduced into Kashmir practices which befitted them'. King Harsha (1089-1101 AD) employed many Turkish Muslims in his army. King Biksacara (1120-1121 AD) recruited Muslim soldiers and sent them on military expeditions to Poonch and Rajouri. Marco Polo, the Venetian traveller records that Muslims had settled in Kashmir before the end of the thirteenth century. He wrote: "people of Kashmir did not kill birds and animals and if they wished to take meat they engaged Muslims who lived among them to play the butcher." This is evidence enough to prove that long before Rinchan's accession to power in the early 14th century, a fair proportion of people of

Kashmir had already embraced Islam.

The propagation of Islam begun by travellers, traders and adventurers, received further impetus from saints and sufis of Persia and Central Asia, who subsequently came to Kashmir. The conditions prevailing in Kashmir in the early 14th century were tailor-made for the switchover from Hinduism to Islam. Hindu Kashmir had disintegrated politically owing to misrule of incompetent kings. While the kings, the courtiers and the Brahmans lived profligately, the lot of the masses was miserable. Social decadence was writ large and spiritually people were destitute. The political, economic, social and moral scenario of Kashmir, at the beginning of the 14th century, created despondency among the people. Any change that had the prospect of emancipating them from the hopeless situation was, therefore, sure to be welcomed. Islam with its stirring message of unity of God, flavour of democracy and egalitarianism and its philosophy of universal brotherhood of mankind transcending racial, national, sectarian and caste barriers, offered the hope of regeneration.

Bulbulshah from Turkistan was the first sufi to enter Kashmir during the reign of Suhadeva (1301-1320). He was full of piety and love and through precept and example won over many Hindus to the Islamic fold. The most important convert made by BulbulShah was king Rinchan who was Buddhist at the time of his accession to the throne in 1320. The royal patronage which Islam secured through Rinchan's conversion, catalysed new conversions. It is said that following Rinchan's conversion, as many as 10,000 Hindus embraced the creed of BulbulShah without any demur. Kashmir thus witnessed a revolution, albeit peaceful and imperceptible, which was further augmented by the arrival of a host of sufis in the reign of Shahmir dynasty.

Rinchan was the first Muslim ruler of Kashmir (1320-1323) under the name of Sadr-ud-Din. After his death, the land once again relapsed into Hindu rule for 16 years under Udyanadeva and Kota Rani. The final blow to their rule was given by

Shahmir in 1339 and he may therefore be regarded as the real founder of the Sultanate in Kashmir. After his accession to the throne in 1339, Shahmir assumed the title of Shams-ud-Din.

Shahmir was humane, just and generous and, like Rinchan, tried to heal the wounds inflicted on Kashmir by Mongol invasions and nearly two centuries of feudal anarchy and misrule. He cancelled laws and regulations which were of an oppressive nature and abolished many of the extra taxes which had been imposed by the previous rulers. He kept the feudal chiefs under control and to counteract their influence, he raised to prominence, two families - the Magres, who were of indigenous origin, and the Chaks who had migrated from Dardistan in the early 14th century. Shahmir appointed Lankar Chak as his commander-in-chief and other officers in the army from among the Magres. Both Chaks and Magres were destined to play an important part in the history of Kashmir as the years rolled by.

Shahmir introduced a new era called the Kashmiri era in place of the Hindu calendar which had been in force hitherto. The new calendar began with Rinchan's accession and conversion to Islam, which was fixed at 720 A.H (1320 AD). This calendar was used in all State documents until the Mughal conquest in 1586, although it continued to be used in the rural areas of Kashmir until the beginning of the twentieth century. Shahmir harmonised social relations between Kashmiris and outsiders by encouraging matrimonial alliances. Shahmir had come to Kashmir unnoticed in search of fortune but taking advantage of the political chaos that prevailed in the country and by his energy and perseverance he rose to power and founded his dynasty. Although, he ruled for only three years, yet he was able to win the loyalty of his subjects who considered him as their saviour. Shahmir died in 1342 and is buried at Andarkot. The people of Andarkot remember his grave as that of Sultan Badshah, little knowing that he was the founder of Muslim rule in Kashmir, about whom a poet has said:-

*The standard of the Badshah, the cherisher of the faith,
Cast its mighty shadow over all the world,
The messengers of the sky conveyed,
The news of his justice to countries all,
The body of disturbance became weak and thin,
The house of oppression into ruin fell."*

Shahmir was succeeded by his eldest son, Jamshed in 1342. Soon after the accession, Jamshed's younger brother Ali Sher was incited by some courtiers to revolt. After a bloody encounter, Ali Sher seized the throne and styled himself as Sultan Ala-ud-Din.

Ala-ud-Din's reign was essentially one of peace and internal reform and aimed at the amelioration of the hard conditions of people. Towns and cities which had become depopulated, in the wake of Dulcha's and Achala's excesses, were repopulated. The king built a townlet called Ala-ud-Dinpur which is now a part of the city of Srinagar. The capital of the Sultanate was moved from Andarkot to Srinagar.

The moral standards prevalent in Kashmir in the pre-Muslim times were abominable. The character of king Harsha and queens Sugandha and Didda, as depicted by Kalhana, throw abundant light on moral turpitude of the times. To restore public morality, Ala-ud-Din ordered that a childless widow of unchaste character shall not inherit the property of her husband and strangely enough this 14th century law continued on the statute book of this country until recent times.

Shihab-ud-Din succeeded his father Ala-ud-Din in 1354. He straightaway demolished the refractory feudal chiefs who had made themselves independent in the aftermath of the Mongol invasion. Having assured himself of peace in the valley, he set out to conquer the neighbouring territories which had formed part of the kingdom of Kashmir in Lalitaditya's reign in the eighth century. He conquered Gilgit, Dardistan, Baltistan, Ladakh, Kishtwar, Jammu, Chamba, Punjab and the North-West frontier region of India including Peshawar, Swat and Hazara.

Shihab-ud-Din was not only a great warrior but also an able administrator who governed his kingdom with firmness and justice. He also opened a number of schools where religion, law and logic were taught. He was tolerant towards his non-Muslim subjects. Historian Jonaraja narrates that when the Brahman minister, Udayasri suggested to melt the brass image of Buddha and coin the metal into money, the King rejected the suggestion firmly.

Shihab-ud-Din was a builder too. He founded the town of Lakshmi Nagar, named after his wife Lakshmi, at the base of Hari Parbat hill near the Sharika Devi temple. He also founded Shihabudinpur (modern Shadipur) on a delightful spot at the confluence of the rivers Jehlum and Sind. He laid out gardens and parks for the benefit of people. The great Mughal Emperor, Akbar, visiting the town more than two centuries later commented: "This is a delightful spot on the bank of jehlum. The plane trees (Chinars) there raise their heads to the sky and the verdure enchants the eye." Emperor Jehangir describes Shihabuddinpur thus: "About a hundred plane trees of graceful form clustered together on one plot of ground, pleasant and green, join each other so as to shade the whole plot and the whole surface of the ground is grass and trefoil, so much so that to lay a carpet on it would be superfluous and in bad taste."

From the political and military point of view, Shihabuddin's reign of nineteen years was a glorious epoch in Kashmir history. After his death, he was succeeded by his younger brother, Qutbuddin in 1373.

Qutbuddin was remarkable for his zealous attention to public business which he transacted in person with justice and moderation. Famine occurred more than once during his reign but he coped with the situation successfully and relieved the people from starvation. The king's reign was disturbed by the revolt of Poonch garrison which was, however, put down though in the process Kashmir lost its commander-in-chief. In the meantime, the King's nephew Hasan Khan, conspired with Brahman Chief Minister, Udayasri

to dethrone the King but it proved an abortive attempt. Both Hasan Khan and Udayasri were consequently executed. The King founded Qutbuddinpur in Srinagar on which two localities of the city namely, Langarhatta and Pir Haji Muhammad Sahib now stand.

During Qutbuddin's reign (1374-89), Islam made great progress in Kashmir. His reign is best remembered by the arrival of a host of Sayyids (descendants of the Prophet of Islam-PBUH) from Iran who through precept and example encouraged conversion of the people of Kashmir to Islam. The most celebrated of these Sayyids was Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani who was destined to exercise a tremendous influence on the socio-cultural life of Kashmir. The great Sayyid is popularly known in Kashmir as Shah-I-Hamdan and Amir-I-Kabir. His genealogy can be traced to Hazrat Ali, (cousin and son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad PBUH) being sixteenth in direct descent from him.

Sayyid Ali Hamadani arrived for the first time in Kashmir in 1372 and stayed for four months. His second visit occurred in 1379 and lasted for two and a half years. He came for the third and final visit in 1383 along with seven hundred Sayyids and stayed for a year. At this time, the number of Muslims in Kashmir, though significant constituted a minority of population. Moreover, in dress, manners and customs, there was nothing to distinguish Muslims from Hindus. Temples were visited both by the Sultan and his subjects. The Sultan had two wives, who were sisters, in contravention of the Muslim Law. Sayyid Ali denounced these unIslamic practices and asked the Sultan to make amends, which he did. He educated the Sultan and his subjects about various features of Muslim Law. He had discussions with the Brahman priests and after convincing them secured many converts to his faith, by persuasion. Apart from a missionary, Sayyid Ali was a great scholar in Arabic and Persian, a prolific writer and a poet. He has authored more than 100 works on logic, mysticism, jurisprudence, philosophy, political science, ethics and commentaries.

Sayyid Ali selected for his residence in Srinagar, an

extensive plot of land on the right bank of Jehlum, which became known as Khanqah-I-Mualla. A magnificent mosque with an attractive architecture was subsequently raised on the site by Sultan Sikandar (1398-1413). In course of time, this place became the nerve centre of religious and political activities of the Muslims of Kashmir.

A contemporary of Sayyid Ali in Kashmir was the famous wandering ascetic, Lal Ded born in 1335. Consequent upon her unhappy childhood and miserable married life, this celebrated Brahman woman turned an ascetic and preached against the existing Hindu religious notions. The people were generally made to believe in occultism, in magic, in stocks and stones, in springs, in rivers; in fact in all the primitive forms of worship. Lal Ded preached vehemently against formalism in religion and was also opposed to idol worship. The stone in the temple, she says, is no better than a stone in a pavement (R.K. Parmu : History of Muslim rule in Kashmir- page 108). The essentials of Lal Ded's religious philosophy are humanism, unity of God and rejection of idolatry.

Sayyid Ali's mission received a great boost by the contribution of LalDed's philosophy of religion which was admirably consistent with his message of Islam. He left Kashmir in 1384, on reasons of declining health, after entrusting the mission of Islam to his disciples. He died in Hazara and was buried at Kolab in Tadzikistan (Soviet Union). Sayyid Ali's influence continues to be felt in Kashmir even after the lapse of six hundred years.

On Sultan Qutbuddin's death in 1389, his eldest son Sikandar ascended the throne, but as he was a minor, his mother queen Sura acted as regent. She was the last woman to hold the reigns of government in Kashmir until our times. She ruled with a firm hand and put to death her daughter and son-in-law for conspiring against Sikandar. Meanwhile, Rai Magre, the powerful Prime Minister after poisoning Sikandar's brother Haibat Khan, revolted against the King after the latter had come of age. Rai Magre was defeated and imprisoned.

In 1398, Timur from Central Asia stormed into India

and occupied Delhi. He sought allegiance from the King of Kashmir without making any effort to invade Kashmir.

Sikandar, a puritanical Muslim was the first Sultan of Kashmir to enforce Muslim Law with great strictness. He banned the use of alcohol and other intoxicants, prohibited gambling, dancing of women, prostitution and playing of musical instruments. He also abolished self-immolation of widows (Sati) which significantly was followed in India by William Bentinck in 1829 - after a passage of more than 400 years.

Sikandar was an able, generous and brave ruler and looked after the welfare of his subjects. He established schools and founded hospitals where medicines and food were supplied free of charges. He endowed a number of villages for the benefit of travellers, scholars and the needy.

Sultan Sikandar was a great builder too. He founded the townlet of Sikandarpur (modern Nowhatta in Srinagar) and built a magnificent palace and a grand Jamia Masjid there. He laid the foundation stone of Idgah in Srinagar and constructed the Khanqah-I-Mualla on the right bank of Jehlum, at the site where Sayyid Ali Hamadani had preached his faith. Sikandar was a great patron of learned men and mystics and during his reign many of them came to Kashmir from Iran and Central Asia. Some of the more prominent among those who entered Kashmir during this period were :- Sayyid Husain Shirazi, formerly Qazi of Shiraz (Iran), whom Sikandar nominated as the Qazi of Kashmir; Sayyid Muhammad Madani, a great scholar from Madina; Sayyid Ahmed from Isfahan, author of many books on religion; Maulana Afzal of Bukhara was appointed head of the grand college established in the vicinity of Jamia Masjid.

The most prominent missionary to enter Kashmir during Sikandar's reign was Sayyid Muhammad Hamadani, son of the great Sayyid Ali Hamadani. He stayed in Kashmir for 12 years and won over many converts to Islam including Sultan Sikandar's Brahman Prime Minister, Suha Bhatta. The neo-convert was rechristened as Saif-ud-Din. He proved to be the King's evil genius. In his

overenthusiasm, Suha Bhatta prevailed upon Sikandar to adopt an intolerant attitude towards the non-Muslims, some of whom preferred to flee rather than embrace Islam.

In their misplaced zeal for their faith, Sikandar and Saif-ud-Din were also responsible for the destruction of some images and temples. The fantastic stories recorded by some historians about Sikandar's alleged vandalism and consequently calling him an iconoclast do not stand historical scrutiny. Jonaraja, the Brahman historian writing barely 50 years after Sikandar's reign would have us believe that 'all the temples in Kashmir were razed to the ground by Sikandar.' A bird's-eye-view of Kashmir history until Sikandar's reign will throw floodlight on the history of religious persecution in Kashmir's chequered history. Buddhism flourished in Kashmir for nearly 900 years, beginning from Ashoka's time in the third century B.C. Ou-Kong, the famous Chinese pilgrim spent four years in Kashmir in the eighth century. He found more than three hundred monasteries in the kingdom of Kashmir. With the rise of Hindu kings, Buddhism was nearly banished from Kashmir and no trace of the monasteries is left anywhere. King Jayapida, in the eighth century, drowned 99 Brahmans following their protests against confiscation of lands of the Tullamulla temple. Samkaravaraman in the closing years of the ninth century plundered the treasures of temples. To perpetuate his memory, he built the town of Pattan and its temples from the material he had obtained by the plunder of the town and temples of Parihaspura. But, ironically, the destruction of Parihaspura temple is attributed, by the bigoted historian, to Sikandar. Did not Abhimanyu II (958-972) burn down the temples in his time? Harsha (1089-1101), on Kalhana's testimony, remains the unrivalled iconoclast in Kashmir history. "No temple escaped desecration. He appointed a prefect for the overthrow of divine images.... He had night soil and urine poured over the statues of gods..... Images of gods were dragged by lepers." Jonaraja refers to king Rajadeva (1213-1236) who insulted Kashmiri Brahmans and plundered them. The Mongol invasion of Dulacha wrought havoc to 'innumerable gods'. The deeds

of Hindu kings mentioned above are recorded by Brahman historians - Kalhana and Jonaraja but are rarely brought to the notice of school children. On the contrary, every Hindu child learns to heap abuse on Sikandar!

Mirza Haider Dughlat, ruler of Kashmir more than 100 years after Sikandar's death comments in his history of Kashmir: "First and foremost among the wonders of Kashmir stand her idol temples. In and around Srinagar alone, there are more than 150 temples." He describes their size, site and elegant architecture. Surely, denunciation of Sikandar for having demolished all temples is untenable in the light of sober historical judgement. Many temples went into ruins due to fire and earthquakes. Stein observes: "Earthquakes and the imperfect fitting of stones, observable in all Kashmir temples are sufficient to explain the complete ruin, notwithstanding the massive character of the materials." Finally, when the inhabitants of a certain locality embraced Islam, the temples got automatically converted into mosques.

After 24 years of rule, Sikandar was succeeded by his son, Ali Shah in 1413. Saif-ud-Din (Suha Bhatta) continued to be the Prime Minister and zealously followed his policy of proselytism. Ali Shah routed Firuz, his exiled brother, who invaded Kashmir with the help of Turkish troops, at the instance of the Delhi ruler. However, Ali Shah could not save his throne at the hands of his younger brother, Zain-ul-Abidin, who ascended the throne at the age of 19, in 1420.

Zain-ul-Abidin was, perhaps, one of those characters that history throws up only too rarely - a man in whom wide interests and great talents were combined with a genuine love for his subjects. He is revered by Kashmiris to this day and is famous by the name of Budshah (the great king). He ushered an era of peace and prosperity. He reconquered Ladakh and Baltistan which had declared independence before his accession to the Kashmir throne. He extended his kingdom from Peshawar to Sirhind. He established friendly relations and exchanged embassies with the rulers of

Khurasan, Samarqand, Tibet, Azerbaijan, Gilan, Turkey, Egypt and Mecca. He also established friendly ties with the rulers of Delhi, Gujarat, Sindh and Gwalior.

Zain-ul-Abidin revoked all laws discriminatory to the Hindus, recalled Brahmans who had fled from Kashmir during Sikandar's reign and publicly proclaimed a general toleration of all religions. He stopped cow-slaughter but, sadly, permitted Sati.

The king revamped the administration and stamped out corruption; hoarding and blackmarketeering of essential commodities was checked. For the first time in Kashmir history, all important documents were registered.

Zain-ul-Abidin paid special attention to agriculture. He virtually made the whole land arable and well irrigated, resulting in great boost to agricultural production. The one measure which went a long way in ameliorating the condition of peasants was the construction of a network of a dozen canals in the country. This included the Mar canal also. Before this canal was constructed, the surplus waters of the Dal Lake used to flow out into the Jehlum at Habbakadal. The king closed this junction and instead diverted the outflowing lake waters into the Mar canal, which then extended upto Shadipur. It emptied at the confluence of the Jehlum and Sindh rivers. Seven bridges of masonry were also constructed over it. Linking up Srinagar and the Dal Lake, it formed an important inland highway of traffic. Unfortunately, the Mar canal was filled up and obliterated about 20 years ago.

Zain-ul-Abidin was a great builder. During his reign, a large number of buildings, palaces and towns came up. He founded the towns of Nowshahr (a suburb of Srinagar city), Zainagir (near Sopore), Zainapur (near Shopian); Zainakot (8 kms from Srinagar); Zainalank on the Wular Lake) Zainagam (Beru Tehsil). He also restored the ruined city of Andarkot (Zainatilak). He built the tomb of Sayyid Muhammad Madani at Hawal, Srinagar and laid out the charming islands of Sona Lank and Rupa Lank in the Dal Lake. He also built the Zainakadal, the first wooden bridge spanning the

Jehlum.

Nowshahr which became the capital of Zain-ul-Abidin saw the erection of an extraordinary wooden palace for the king said to be so tall that 'it humbled the pride of the peaks of the Himalayas.' It had 12 storeys with 50 rooms in each storey and each room accommodated 500 people. The palace had a gold-plated dome. This palace has long since disappeared.

The king's most extraordinary construction was the island in the Wular Lake, called the ZainaLank. He built a palace and a mosque on it and would retreat there to rest for weeks at a time. The Mugals were the last picnickers at ZainLank. The whole island is in ruins now.

Zain-ul-Abidin was a great patron of learning and was surrounded by a galaxy of saints, scholars, poets, historians and musicians. These included, among others :- Mulla Ahmad Kashmiri-poet-laureate, who translated Mahabharata and Rajatarangini into persian; Maulana Kabir, the king's teacher; Syed Muhammed Madani, a great theologian; Yodha Bhatta, a famous persian scholar who remembered, 65000 couplets of Shahnama, by heart; Jonaraja, the chronicler who completed Rajatarangini upto 1458; Mansur Muhammad contributed a work on Medicine in persian.

The king himself was an author and a poet. Apart from his mother tongue Kashmiri, he knew Sanskrit, Persian and Tibetan languages. Persian replaced Sanskrit as the official language. Translation bureaus were established where Sanskrit works were translated into Persian and vice versa. The king was very fond of books and spent large sums of money in purchasing manuscripts and books from India, Iran, Iraq and Turkistan. He established a big library which, unfortunately, perished only within 100 years, owing to civil wars. Zain-ul-Abidin took great interest in the spread of education. He opened residential schools and granted scholarships to the deserving students. The places of learning in Kashmir attracted students from Afghanistan and Turkistan. The most significant contribution of the king was to make Kashmiri the medium of

instruction in schools. Sheikh Noor-ud-Din, the patron saint of Kashmir, lived during Zain-ul-Abidin's reign and so did Baha-ud-Din Gang Baksh, a great saint of the time.

No doubt, Kashmir had been famous in the Hindu period for its arts and crafts, but they had greatly suffered in the 200 year-old chaos preceding the establishment of the Sultanate. Besides, a large number of artisans had perished in the course of Dulacha's invasion. Zain-ul-Abidin revived the old industries which had either disappeared or declined and at the same time introduced new ones. He sent people to Samarqand for training in paper making and book binding. He encouraged artists and craftsmen from many countries to come to Kashmir and practice their talents until the place became a hive of industry, famous for its exquisite shawls, its paper, its delicately painted papier mache, its superb woodcarving and its fine embroideries, metal work and carpet weaving.

The closing phase of Zain-ul-Abidin's life was clouded with private sorrows and public anxiety. He was grieved at the dissensions among his son and at their attitude of disloyalty towards him. He died on 12th May 1470, at the age of 69. He was buried on the right bank of Jehlum not far from Zainakadal (bridge) which he had constructed, amidst the loud lamentations of his subjects. On that day 'no one cooked food and no smoke arose from the chimneys in Kashmir'.

The Shahmir dynasty reached the meridian of its power and glory under Zain-ul-Abidin. But, after his death, under weak successors, it started on its downward course until it met its final overthrow at the hands of the Chaks. The Chaks were a tough, resilient people from Dardistan who had settled in Kupwara and Trehgam, Kashmir during Suhadeva's reign (1301-1320). The Chaks took advantage of the squabbling, rivalry and intrigues existing among the sons, grandsons and great grandsons of Zain-ul-Abidin to grab power for themselves. Accession to the throne was reduced to mockery. Muhammad Shah, a great grandson of Zain-ul-Abidin came to power no fewer than 5 times, and on each occasion was deposed

by a cousin. Anarchy was the order of the day. Taking advantage of the chaotic conditions in the country, the outlying provinces of the kingdom like Ladakh, Baltistan, Jammu and Rajouri declared independence, leaving only the Valley in the possession of the central government.

During Muhammad Shah's first reign (1484-86), Sayyids acquired complete control over the administration. They soon became unpopular in the country on account of their foreign origin, attitude of arrogance towards the nobles of Kashmir, opposition to caste system and their discouragement of the use of Sanskrit and Kashmiri. The Kashmiri nobles, therefore, organised a plot against the Sayyids. A number of attacks were mounted on the Sayyids until their final defeat. In this phase of civil strife, the city of Nowshahr, including its magnificent palace, was set on fire. The Sayyids were banished from the country. The facade of unity in the country lasted as long as the Sayyids were in power. With the departure of the Sayyids, the nobles, the princes and the pretenders to the throne resumed their internecine quarrels. The 3 principal families constituting the nobility were the Magres, Rainas and Chaks.

A great tragedy befell Kashmir in 1527. For the first time in Kashmir's tortured history, Sikandar, a great grandson of Zain-ul-Abidin sought Delhi's help in grabbing the throne of Kashmir. Delhi has ever since fished in the troubled political waters of Kashmir. Babar, the Mughal Emperor, immediately obliged by invading Kashmir. The prime minister of Kashmir, Kaji Chak's patriotism was stirred. He despatched his forces along with his relations, namely Tazi Chak, Hussain Chak and Ghazi Chak to repel the Mughal invasion. The Mughals were defeated at Naushahra (Jammu province). Sikandar was captured, imprisoned and blinded. Soon after the Mughal defeat, a group of Kashmiri nobles, principally from Magre and Malik families, invited Babar, on behalf of a rebel cousin of the king, to invade Kashmir for the second time. Early in the spring of 1528, the rebel nobles along with Nazuk Shah, a cousin of the king and the Mughal army entered Kashmir. The invading party was confronted

by Kaji Chak's forces at Tapar, on the Srinagar-Baramulla road. Although, the Kashmir forces fought valiantly, yet they were defeated. Kaji Chak escaped to the Salt Range. The Mughals, Magres and Maliks entered Srinagar in triumph and Nazuk Shah was enthroned nominally and the kingdom was divided among the powerful nobles. The Mughal troops, however, on request left Kashmir without creating any alibi for non-withdrawal.

When the Mughal forces returned to India, they informed Kamran, emperor Humayun's brother, that owing to the disunity in Kashmir, it was not difficult to conquer it. Kamran, therefore, set out to invade Kashmir which he successfully accomplished in 1531. Kashmiris were defeated, Srinagar was occupied, the city was set on fire and resistance was put down brutally.

At this stage, the Kashmiri nobles appealed to Kaji Chak to return from the Salt Range to salvage the motherland from the clutches of Mughal marauders. Kaji Chak immediately returned and led the Kashmiri forces. A fierce battle between Kashmiris and Mughals was fought at Athwajan, on the outskirts of Srinagar. Incapable of winning a victory, the Mughals sought a peaceful resolution. Following negotiations between Kaji Chak and the Mughal commander, held in a boat on the Jehlum, the Mughals agreed to quit Kashmir.

Yet another onslaught on Kashmir came from the northeastern side. Sultan Sayyid Khan of Kashghar (modern Sinkiang province of China) sent his forces under the command of Mirza Haider Dughlat, a Mongol, to invade Ladakh in 1532. After the fall of Ladakh, Mirza Haider entered Kashmir via Zojila pass in 1533. The Mongol soldiers burnt down villages and towns and massacred people irrespective of creed, age and sex. Pitched battles between the Mongols and Kashmiris were fought. The religious leaders' edict that the killing of invaders was obligatory, stirred the spirits of Kashmiris who resorted to guerilla attacks on the Mongols, which proved successful. Mirza Haider sued for peace and left Kashmir via the Zojila pass.

Mirza Haider changed his master. From the service of the Sultan of Kashghar, he entered the service of Humayun, the second Mughal emperor of India. The unpatriotic nobles of Kashmir sought Mirza Haider's help in grabbing the Kashmir throne.

Mirza Haider entered Kashmir in 1540, along with the self-seeking nobles of Kashmir. He became the defacto ruler of Kashmir and set up Nazuk Shah as the nominal king. Ismail Shah, the king and his prime minister Kaji Chak were taken unawares. They fled the country and sought the Afghan king, Sher Shah Suri's help in Delhi; the latter obliged by sending his troops to Kashmir under the command of Kaji Chak. A grim battle was fought on 13th August 1541 at Wathore, on the outskirts of Srinagar. Mirza Haider was victorious. The Chaks attacked Mirza Haider again in 1544 and 1546, though unsuccessfully.

Although a strong champion of Hanafi orthodoxy, Mirza Haider had been, at first, owing to reasons of political expediency, very liberal towards the Shia Muslims. In fact, to please the Chaks who were mostly Shias, he had even visited like a devotee, the tomb of Mir Shams-ud-Din Iraqi, the principal Shia missionary of Kashmir. But after the refusal of the Chaks to accept Mirza Haider's overlordship of Kashmir, the latter banned the Shiite and Shafiite sects. He destroyed and desecrated the tomb of Mir Shams-ud-Din located in the Zadibal area of Srinagar. The Shiite community was understandably anguished at Dughlat's dastardly act and they removed the mortal remains of the saint to Chadura for burial. Daniyal, the son of Mir Shams-ud-Din was executed on 14th March, 1550, consequent on the decree of 3 Sunni Qazis, after obtaining fake evidence that Daniyal had reviled the first 3 Caliphs of Islam. Daniyal's trunk and head were taken away by his followers and secretly deposited and after Mirza Haider's death, they were collected and buried in the tomb of his father. A number of other Shia scholars and theologians were persecuted, exiled and their properties confiscated. This, alas, is how Shia-Sunni feud was introduced into Kashmir by the Mongol marauder. The Mughals wanted to

follow the policy of divide and rule in Kashmir and devised and fomented sectarian bitterness. The sectarian feuds in Kashmir have ever since been dictated by the political compulsions of the rulers and are not remotely even related to any theological niceties.

Offended greatly by Mirza Haider's sectarian intolerance and his growing arrogance towards the people, the nobles of Kashmir felt alienated and thus began to conspire against him. He was killed brutally in an encounter with the Kashmiris at Khampur, 18 kilometres south of Srinagar, in October 1551. He was buried near Zain-ul-Abidin's tomb. The Kashmiris showed great generosity in allowing Mirza Haider's followers and family members to leave the country for Kashghar unhurt. During his stay in Kashmir, he wrote the persian chronicle, the *Tarikh-I-Rashidi*. He introduced hot baths (Hamam) in the mosques.

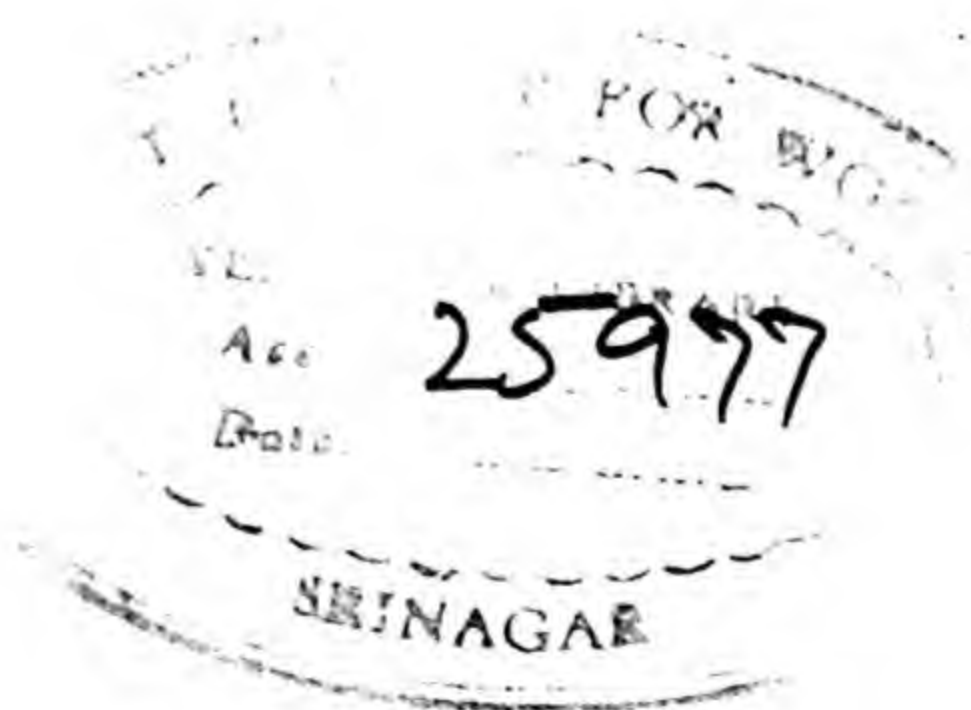
Following the death of Mirza Haider in 1551, civil strife made a recurrence in Kashmir. Intrigues became an integral part of the temperament of Kashmiri nobility. The kings had become mere titular heads. In 1552, Haibat Khan Niyazi, an Afghan fugitive attacked Kashmir but was repulsed by Idi Raina. Daulat Chak in turn defeated Idi Raina and became the prime minister. Under Daulat Chak's patronage, the ban on Shiaism and Shafiism were lifted and inhabitants were free to pursue any religion or sect they liked.

Chaks developed mutual jealousies resulting in open hostility. Daulat Chak was deposed by his own cousin, Ghazi Chak who became the prime minister and in turn, the latter nominated a new king. The conspiring nobles sought Mughal intervention. Abdul Maali, a one-time close confidant of Humayun invaded Kashmir in 1558 but was defeated by Ghazi Chak at Hanjivera, near Pattan (25 kms from Srinagar). Soon after some disgruntled relations of Ghazi Chak sought Akbar's intervention in relation to the Kashmir throne. Consequently, Qara Bahadur was sent to invade Kashmir in 1560 but he too was defeated by the Kashmir forces at Rajouri.

Ruined by ego, on account of his successive victories against internal as well as external enemies, Ghazi Chak began to treat

Sultan Habib Shah with insolence. Finally, one day, in 1561, in open court, Ghazi Chak's brother Ali, took off the crown from the king's head and placed it on his brother's head. The courtiers hailed Ghazi Chak as their monarch. Habib Shah was removed from the throne and imprisoned.

Thus came to an end the first Muslim dynasty of Kashmir, the dynasty of Shahmir who had entered Kashmir as a soldier of fortune in the early 14th century. The succession of a line of stipendiary and weak rulers after Zain-ul-Abidin and the rising power of nobles, who lacking patriotism, did not hesitate even to mortgage their country's freedom simply to humble their personal rivals, are the principal factors which wrought havoc not only to the Shahmir dynasty but also to the country.



CHAPTER 4

LOSS OF INDEPENDENCE

Following Zain-ul-Abidin's death in 1470 A.D, unmistakable signs of crumbling of the Shahmir dynasty were evident. Tribal groups began to exploit the uncertain conditions in the country with a view to capture the political power. Of these tribes, the most dominating were the Magres and the Chaks. These two tribes openly clashed with each other in their contest for political power, which they considerably exerted in turns. As a consequence, successive kings were reduced to the position of mere spectators from the throne. The beginning of the 16th century was characterised by armed confrontation between the king and nobles, master and servant and among the feudal lords. Mutual rivalries and intrigues were rife. Puppet kings were set up and deposed in rapid succession by the contending tribal groups. It was out of this chaos and confusion that Chaks grabbed the Kashmir throne after deposing Habib Shah, the last Shahmir king in 1561 A.D. The Chaks were a brave and intrepid tribe, enormous in stature and warlike in nature.

The Chaks have exercised a lot of influence on the political, religious and cultural life of Kashmir. Though their rule lasted only until 1586 A.D, yet their tribe has had a long and chequered history even before and after assumption of sovereign power. The first member of the Chak tribe who entered Kashmir from Dardistan in the reign of Suhadeva (1301-1320 A.D) was Lankar Chak. He settled in Trahgam. He belonged to the royal family of Dardistan and fled the country owing to a conflict with his brother for the throne. The descendants of his estranged brother too migrated to Kashmir subsequently and settled in Kupwara. Thus the two Chak factions which had split before their entry into Kashmir came to be known as Trahgami and Kupwari Chaks.

The Chaks did not attract the notice of Kashmir

kings until the rule of Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-1470 AD). Pandu Chak, a descendant of Lankar Chak revolted against the policy of forced labour which Zain-ul-Abidin employed in the construction of his palace at Zainagir. Pandu Chak put the palace on fire and fled to Karna. He was seized by the king alongwith other male members of the family. They were all flogged to death. However, women and children of the Chak tribe were spared punishment and indeed rehabilitated by Zain-ul-Abidin. With the passage of time, the surviving Chaks became an honoured class and entered into matrimonial relations with the Shahmir dynasty and other nobles of Kashmir. Husain Chak, the posthumous son of Pandu Chak became a leading noble of Kashmir and the progenitor of Trahgami Chaks who were destined to rule Kashmir for a quarter of a century (1561-1586 AD).

After the death of Zain-ul-Abidin, the Chak power and influence rose meteorically. Shams, a Kupwari Chak became the first Chak prime minister of Kashmir under Sultan Fath Shah (1486-1493 A.D.). He married the daughter of Husain Chak which resulted in the reunion of the two estranged Chak families. Shams Chak became the leader of both the Trahgami and Kupwari Chaks. Civil strife, intrigues and rivalries precipitated the imprisonment of Shams Chak and his eventual murder. The Chaks were thrown in disarray and reduced to penury. They sought service under the new prime minister, Musa Raina who had lately been converted to the Shiite sect by Mir Shams-ud-Din Iraqi. Majority of the Chaks also embraced the Shiite faith under the influence of Musa Raina. Mir Shams-ud-Din, a Musavi Sayyid divine of Iran came to Kashmir for the first time in 1481 A.D. He won over thousands of converts to Islam during his 8 years stay. His second visit occurred in 1502 A.D. He built the Imambara of Zadibal in 1505 A.D and died in 1532 A.D. He was buried at Zadibal. Following the desecration of his grave by the Mughal governor, Mirza Haider Dughlat, the mortal remains of the Sayyid were taken to Chadura surreptitiously for burial.

Kaji Chak replaced Musa Raina as the prime

minister and battled incessantly against the Magres. His patriotism saved Kashmir against three successive invasions launched by the Mughals in 1527, 1528 and 1531 A.D. Chaks also fought valiantly against Mirza Haider Dughlat but were defeated. Mirza Haider persecuted the Shias in general and Chaks in particular. The Chaks quickly rallied the people of Kashmir and succeeded in killing Mirza Haider in 1551 at Khampur Sarai. The Chaks consolidated themselves under Daulat Chak after the demise of his brother Kaji Chak. Ibrahim Shah, the titular king appointed Daulat Chak as his prime minister. Owing to a family feud, Daulat Chak was deposed by his nephews, Ghazi Chak and Husain Chak. Ghazi Chak became the prime minister and the defacto ruler of Kashmir. He successfully repulsed the Mughal invasions led by Abul Maali in 1556 and Qara Bahadur in 1560. Ghazi's brother Ali Chak, literally removed the crown from the head of last Shahmir king Habib Shah and placed it on Ghazi Chak's head who was acclaimed as the king of Kashmir.

Soon after his proclamation as king in 1561 AD, Ghazi Chak suppressed the revolt of refractory nobles and established peace in the country. Ghazi's qualities of vigilance, courage, energy, tenacity of purpose and administrative skill entitled him to found a dynasty. He ensured full religious freedom to his subjects. Forced labour was abolished. Ghazi Chak was succeeded by his brother Husain Chak in 1563.

Husain Chak had to face a succession of conspiracies which he put down ruthlessly. The conspirators included his brother Shankar Chak, his nephew Ahmed, his prime minister Mubariz Khan and some disgruntled nobles including members of the Chak tribe. Ali Koka, a Sunni noble was appointed the prime minister.

It was during Ali Koka's prime ministership that an ugly incident of Shia-Sunni bickering took place which had grave repercussions on the subsequent history of Kashmir. On a Friday afternoon in 1568 AD, an altercation occurred outside Srinagar's Jamia Masjid between Qazi Habib, Sunni Imam of Jamia Masjid and Yusuf Ainder, a Shia noble. Qazi Habib whipped Ainder who

retaliated by inflicting sword cuts on the former. An ugly situation erupted. Husain Chak, on the advice of Ali Koka appointed a council of Sunni theologians comprised of Qazi Musa, Mulla Yusuf Almas and Mulla Ganai to investigate the incident and suggest punishment. In flagrant violation of precepts of all schools of Muslim Law, the theologians awarded death penalty to Aindar. Even Qazi Habib remonstrated against the grotesque judgement because he had survived the attack. Aindar was mercilessly stoned to death under the directions of the mischievous prime minister Ali Koka. This episode excited the sectarian differences to heights of frenzy. The Shiite community supported by enlightened Sunnis demanded a review of the whole case. Mirza Maqim, who was in Kashmir at the time as Akbar's ambassador was entrusted the job of reinvestigation of Aindar's execution. He summoned the king, the prime minister, theologians of all the 5 schools of Muslim law and the members of the council who had pronounced the death penalty. The whole case was discussed threadbare. Ali Koka's mischief was exposed. Mirza Maqim decreed that Qazi Musa, Mulla Almas and Mulla Ganai be executed. This decree was upheld by scholars of various schools of law including Qazi Abdul Gafoor (Hanafite), Qazi Zain (Shafiite) Mulla Sulaiman and Mulla Raza (Shiite). Qazi Musa fled but the other two Qazis - Almas and Ganai were executed. Fresh disturbances followed in the wake of this judgement.

Ali Koka and a few nobles and selfseeking scholars fed Emperor Akbar with a distorted version of the Aindar case and the consequential developments. Akbar felt enraged at Mirza Maqim's decree and as a consequence sent the latter to gallows in 1569 AD at Fatehpur Sikri. Of all the Chak rulers who ascended the throne of Kashmir, Husain Chak was by far the best. He was a compassionate ruler and an efficient administrator with a fine literary taste. He distributed money among the poor and needy after Friday prayers. He protected his subjects from corrupt officials and rid the country of thieves and robbers. In spite of being a Shiite, he allowed the practice of Hanafite Law in the kingdom. He was very liberal in his

dealings with the non-Muslims. A scholar in his own right, he composed verses in Persian. He established schools and colleges in the kingdom and patronised men of letters and fine arts. Husain was the only king of Kashmir who planned his engagements. Thus, Friday was devoted to discussions with literary men and scholars; Saturday was passed in the company of Brahman and Buddhist priests; Sunday he spent with the Sufis; Monday, he attended the court with the Qazi and Mufti; Tuesday, he went out hunting; Wednesday, he spent with the army; Thursday he passed in the company of musicians and friends.

Owing to infirmity, Husain Chak abdicated in favour of his brother Ali Chak in 1570 AD. Ali introduced himself to his subjects publicly at the Jamia Masjid and declared that he would never allow religious considerations to influence the state affairs and would rule like a patriot. Sayyid Mubarak Baihaqi, a Sunni noble, was appointed the prime minister. Internal disturbances caused by refractory nobles and some disgruntled members of the Chak dynasty were put down.

In 1572 AD prince Yusuf, Ali Chak's son revolted against his father. A fratricidal war between father and son was averted by the intervention of Sayyid Mubarak. The king and the prince buried the hatchet. Haji Khan and Salim Khan, descendants of Zain-ul-Abidin, living in exile in Poonch, aspired for the throne of Kashmir. Their invasion was repulsed successfully by the Chaks in 1575 AD.

In 1573, Emperor Akbar sent Mulla Ishaq and Qazi Sadr-ud-Din as ambassadors to Kashmir ostensibly with the object of proposing a marriage between Prince Salim and Husain Chak's daughter. In reality their mission was to find out if the conditions in Kashmir were favourable for a Mughal invasion. Ali Shah accepted the proposal and sent his niece along with presents of shawls and saffron to the imperial court. He also had the Friday sermon recited and the coins struck in the name of Akbar.

Kashmir was devastated by famine and fire in 1576

AD. Considerable loss of life and destruction of property occurred. The king exhausted all the resources of the state in alleviating the sufferings of his subjects. His conduct as a ruler was exemplary.

Though a Shiite by faith, Ali Chak was liberal in his religious outlook. Emulating his brothers, Ghazi and Husain, he also appointed a Sunni as his prime minister and cultivated matrimonial relations with the Sunnis. The king had high regard for Sufis, saints and learned men. He daily paid a visit to Shaikh Hamza Makhdoom, a venerable sufi of the time. He paid equal respect to scholars like Baba Daud Khaki and Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi.

While playing polo at Idgah, Srinagar Ali Chak was fatally wounded in 1579. A bloody war of succession between the deceased king's son, Yusuf and his brother Abdal, followed. Yusuf Chak was victorious and ascended the throne. He abolished all unfair taxes and attempted to consolidate his position. Within months of Yusuf Chak's accession, his jealous cousins and a few disgruntled nobles incited widespread discontentment. Instead of winning over his adversaries diplomatically, Yusuf Chak forced a battle on them which he lost. He fled to Rajouri. Sayyid Mubarak who had served the earlier Chak kings as prime minister was enthroned in 1580. His reign of 6 months was marked by religious toleration and humanism. No other king of Kashmir stands comparison with Mubarak's modesty and simplicity. He broke the royal crown studded with precious stones and distributed it among the poor and needy.

Many Chak nobles felt disturbed at the rise of Sayyid Mubarak. They invited Yusuf to return to Kashmir. When the forces of Yusuf Chak and Mubarak clashed, the former received no help from the invitees. Yusuf was again defeated and he fled to Rajouri. In the meantime, the Chak nobles sought Mubarak's abdication in favour of Lohar Chak, a cousin of Yusuf Chak. The nine-month old reign of Lohar was marked by a just administration and remarkable prosperity.

With the rise of Lohar Chak, Yusuf living in exile at

Rajouri lost all hopes of regaining the throne without foreign assistance. He, therefore, decided in 1580 to invoke the help of Emperor Akbar. This provided a great opportunity for Akbar to annex the Kashmir kingdom. After staying for 11 months at the court of Akbar in Agra, Yusuf Chak decided to march on Kashmir alongwith Mughal forces led by Raja Man Singh and Mirza Yusuf. When Yusuf Chak reached Lahore, he was met by some nobles of Kashmir who impressed on him the undesirable effects of bringing Mughal forces into Kashmir. He realised that he would be carried to the throne as a Mughal nominee and would be subservient to the wishes of the Mughal Emperor. He therefore left for Kashmir along with his national followers, without the accompanying Mughal forces. Lohar Chak and Yusuf Chak confronted each other at Sopore. In the battle that followed, Yusuf was victorious. He regained the throne in November 1580 after living in exile for 18 months.

There was no respite in the intrigues of nobles against the king. He suppressed the revolts and punished the traitors. However, Haider Chak, a cousin of the king, fled to Lahore to seek Raja Man Singh's protection who used the former to promote Mughal imperial interests in Kashmir. The firmness that Yusuf had shown in tackling the various state problems was found wanting in his dealings with Akbar. It has already been noted that in response to Yusuf Chak's request for help to regain the Kashmir throne in 1580, the Emperor had supplied him with a force but the former had not used it. This incident had infuriated Akbar. As a consequence he despatched two ambassadors, Mirza Tahir and Salih Aqil, who delivered to Yusuf Chak an imperial command that he had not kept the Mughal court informed about the conditions in Kashmir and that he should immediately present himself at the Emperor's court. When Yusuf Chak discussed this order with his advisors, they opined that since Akbar wanted to annex Kashmir, a war with the Mughals was inevitable. They advised the king to strengthen the frontier posts and prepare for resistance.

Yusuf Chak paid no heed to this advice as he was already overawed by Akbar's might. Instead, he decided to appease Akbar by sending his son, prince Haider and Shaikh Yaqub Sarfi to the Mughal court, along with costly presents. These gestures of loyalty failed to satisfy Akbar who insisted that Yusuf should personally come to court. Timur Beg, a Mughal ambassador was sent to Kashmir to convey Akbar's order. Yusuf responded by sending his eldest son, prince Yaqub to Akbar's court. Akbar again complained that Yusuf had not given any proof of loyalty to the Mughal empire. Akbar regarded Yusuf as his vassal. Yusuf thought otherwise; hence his prevarication in paying personal obeisance at the Mughal court.

Akbar sent yet another message to Yusuf Chak, in October 1585 through Hakim Ali Gilani and Baha-ud-Din Kambu, to present himself at the imperial court. Yusuf was personally inclined to pay homage to Akbar as he was cowed by the Mughal power but none of his counsellors was prepared to bow before Akbar. At this time there was a general upsurge in the country and every Kashmiri, rich and poor, old and young, was ready to fight for the motherland to the last man. The patriotic people appealed to Yusuf Chak not to wilt. The mission of the Mughal envoys was thus frustrated by the universal hostility of Kashmiris against the Mughals. These developments infuriated Akbar who ordered an invasion of Kashmir on December 20, 1585. Akbar deputed Haider Chak and Shaikh Yaqub Sarfi to act as guides for the invading forces. The Mughal forces entered Kashmir via Hazara. They were confronted by the Kashmiri forces near Baramulla. The Mughals suffered reverses owing to, scarcity of eatables, inclement weather and of course stiff resistance of Kashmiris. The Mughal commanders sued for peace. As Yusuf Chak was anxious to save the kingdom and his subjects from subsequent harassment by the Mughal army, he held secret parleys with the Mughal commander on 14th February, 1586. The Mughals assured Yusuf Chak that after paying homage at the imperial court, he would return to his kingdom. Yusuf agreed. This incident signified Yusuf's personal surrender.

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Although the Kashmiris were let down by their ruler at a critical juncture, their spirits were not broken. Yaqub Chak replaced his father as the king and resumed the struggle against the invaders. Enormous casualties were inflicted upon the reinforced Mughal army. The Mughals were forced to make overtures of peace to Yaqub Chak. A treaty was therefore concluded between the two sides. It was agreed, inter alia, that Yusuf Chak would retain his throne; he would be escorted back to the kingdom of Kashmir after paying obeisance at Akbar's court; that the mint, saffron cultivation and shawl manufacture would be under the control of Mughal officers.

After the conclusion of peace, the Mughal army withdrew from Kashmir. Yusuf Chak was presented to Akbar on 28 March, 1586. Instead of allowing Yusuf to return to Kashmir, he was imprisoned at Lahore and finally exiled to Bihar. This was a naked violation of the peace treaty between the two sides and amounted to treachery. Kashmir has been a victim of foreign perfidy ever since.

Of handsome appearance, an expert in the science of music, fond of Persian and Kashmiri poetry, patron of poets, scholars and musicians and himself a poet, Yusuf Chak was one of the most cultured rulers of Kashmir. He was a born naturalist and discovered the hitherto unknown charms of Gulmarg. He laid the foundation of a garden known as Bagh-i-Yusuf situated between the Kutkul and the left bank of Jehlum, in the heart of Srinagar. No trace of this fabulous garden is left now. In exile, Yusuf's lot was very tragic. He pined for his beloved queen, Habba Khatun who not only possessed a sweet voice but was an eminent poetess of Kashmir. Habba Khatun introduced, for the first time, romanticism in Kashmiri poetry. Hitherto our poetry was essentially mystical. Living in exile, Yusuf knew that he would never see Habba again. He felt depressed and shattered and ultimately died in 1592. He was buried at Biswak in the Patna district of Bihar.

After repudiation of the peace treaty by the Mughals, Yaqub Chak declared himself the king of Kashmir. His rule was

marked by incompetence, arrogance and sectarian fanaticism. The nobles of Kashmir rose in revolt against him but it was suppressed temporarily. The Sunni Muslims became a target of Yaqub's persecution. He adopted the policy of propagating Shiite Islam by controversial means. He appointed Mulla Ganai, a Shiite scholar as Qazi of the city in place of the Sunni divine, Qazi Musa. After repeated wranglings with Qazi Musa on theological matters, the king got him executed. This created an upheaval in Kashmir for Qazi Musa, apart from being a religious head of Sunnis, had acquired considerable political clout too. Qazi Musa's execution was an extremely unwise act on the part of Yaqub Chak for it paved the way for Mughal annexation of Kashmir.

Owing to Yaqub's harshness, Baba Daud Khaki fled to Multan along with his followers. A number of Kashmiri nobles, headed by Shaikh Yaqub Sarfi proceeded to the court of Akbar. Requesting Akbar to annex Kashmir, they entered into the following agreement with the Emperor:-

i) There shall be complete freedom of worship.

ii) Kashmiris shall not be made slaves.

iii) Kashmiris shall not be molested or oppressed nor shall forced labour be imposed on them.

On 28 June 1586, Akbar despatched a large force under the command of Qasim Khan to invade Kashmir. The Mughal forces entered Kashmir via the Pirpanjal range. Yaqub's supporters deserted him resulting in his flight to Kishtwar. In the meantime, however, patriotic elements of Kashmir assembled to oppose the advancing Mughals resulting in Mughal defeat at Hastivang in the Pirpanjal range. Thereafter the Kashmiris not only became complacent but also indulged in indecent scramble for power caused by the vacant throne. First, Husain Chak, a second cousin of Yaqub Chak

became the king. His reign lasted for only 4 days. He was compelled to make way for Shams Chak.

Meanwhile the Mughals reorganised themselves and resumed their invasion. Shams Chak tried to check them but without success. Consequently, the Mughals entered Srinagar triumphantly on 16 October 1586. Akbar was proclaimed the sovereign of Kashmir and the kingdom ceased to be an independent state.

To complete the conquest of Kashmir, the Mughals had to reduce to submission Yaqub Chak and Shams Chak who still formed the rallying points for people opposed to alien rule. The Chaks resorted to guerilla tactics and under Yaqub's leadership launched an offensive on Srinagar in November 1586 but suffered a reverse. Yaqub Chak fled to Kishtwar again.

Within a few months the Chaks reorganised themselves and challenged the Mughals at the foot of Shankaracharya Hill but again suffered a defeat. Yaqub Chak still did not lose heart. Daily raids were conducted against the Mughals who were worn down by these tactics. The Mughal commander, Qasim Khan submitted his resignation to Akbar and was replaced by Yusuf Khan. Yaqub suffered further erosion in his ranks and he fled to Kishtwar for the third time. The next round of hostilities saw the final rout of both Yaqub and Shams Chak. Realising the futility of further resistance, Yaqub apologised to Akbar and paid obeisance to the Emperor at Pattan in July 1589. He was imprisoned and sent to Bihar where he died in 1593. He was buried near his father's grave at Biswak.

Yaqub was energetic, courageous and strong willed. His heroic resistance to Mughal occupation is unique in the history of Kashmir. But his bigotry ultimately cost the country its independence.

CHAPTER 5

MUGHAL IMPERIALISM

Sovereignty over Kashmir meant to Akbar fulfilment of the dreams of Babar and Humayun. Akbar's political purpose in occupation of Kashmir, besides expansion of his empire, was to acquire access to Afghanistan and Central Asia. With the Mughal conquest, Kashmir lost her separate identity and became like any other province of the empire. Srinagar was reduced to the status of a provincial town. The indomitable spirit which the Kashmiris displayed, in resisting the Mughal occupation of their motherland, earned them the wrath of the marauding Mughals. The Mughals converted Srinagar into a cantonment and its buildings into barracks for the army of occupation. They caused much panic and distress to the population and oppression was the order of the day. The Mughal soldiers looted people of all their valuable assets. The freedom fighters were mercilessly tortured and their martial spirit destroyed. With the loss of independence, Kashmir's lofty culture began to decline. Owing to absence of local patronage, Srinagar was denuded of its poets, painters, musicians and scholars, thereby precipitating the cultural impoverishment of Kashmir. Not content with these excesses, the Mughals employed their poets to stigmatise Kashmiris by describing them as 'selfish, wicked and ungrateful people'. In short, the consequence of loss of independence was the loss of self-respect.

The Mughals had come from highlands of Central Asia and their stay in the hot, dry and dusty plains of India made them homesick for mountains, rushing streams and nostalgic for the flowers and trees of cooler climates. To render the path smooth for Akbar's first visit to Kashmir in 1589, 5000 labourers were sent ahead to build a road through the difficult country that had to be crossed to reach the Valley. The arrival of the Mughal Court was like the most spectacular

circus coming to town. It must have been an exquisite sight to see the jewelled figure of the Emperor riding a decorated elephant, glittering palanquins hiding the ladies of the harem, the uniformed horsemen and the sleek courtiers in their silk and brocades.

Akbar's first impressions of Kashmir, as recorded by his court historian, Abul Fazl, were: "The country is enchanting a garden of perpetual spring. Its streams are sweet to the taste, its waterfalls music to the ear....The flowers are enchanting... Violets, the red rose and wild narcissus cover the plains...." The Mughals thus christened the Valley "an earthly paradise". The Valley gave them a sanctuary from the unbearable heat of India, a resort in which they could regain their health, refresh their spirits and amuse themselves. Kashmir also supplied the royal larders in the plains of India with melons, apples, peaches, plums, apricots and grapes. Cartloads of ice from Kashmir arrived daily in the Mughal capital and there were regular supplies of ducks, water fowls and vegetables to supplement the royal diet. Of course, Kashmir was the only supplier of saffron, being cultivated principally at Pampore, near Srinagar.

During his first visit, Akbar saw towns, villages, springs and streams of Kashmir. The Kashmiri Brahman historian, Suka a contemporary of Akbar, records that the Emperor distributed 'gold among Brahmans and presented cows, adorned with pearls and gold, to the priests of Martand temple.'

Akbar attempted to streamline the revenue administration but was thwarted in this sphere by the unscrupulous Mughal officials. Their misappropriation of government revenue and oppression of the peasantry caused great resentment among the people. A rebellion, lasting for 51 days resulted, which was however, ruthlessly put down.

Akbar visited Kashmir for the second time in October 1592. He discovered the charms of autumn and saw the saffron fields in bloom and was enchanted: "a sight that would entrance the most fastidious." On the Dewali festival, he ordered that boats, river banks and the roofs of houses in Srinagar be illuminated with lamps.

During his third visit in 1597, Akbar inspected the construction of a fortress, called Nagar Nagar, that would be the Mughal base in the Valley and ensure that it remained safely in their hands. An immense wall, about 10 feet thick was constructed at the base of the Hari Parbat hill in Srinagar and within it palaces, houses and gardens were built, for the Emperor, his wives and nobles. Two hundred Indian masons were brought to Kashmir to work on Nagar Nagar and Kashmiris were employed as labourers. The fortress also served the purpose of segregating the imperial troops from the city, since they had become a constant source of harassment and molestation to people in whose houses they were quartered. Nagar Nagar was completed in the reign of Jehangir, son of Akbar. Nothing is left of the imperial township now except the immense wall and its 3 imposing but crumbling gateways.

The Mughals also laid out a great garden on the north-west side of the Dal Lake which they called Nasim Bagh. A thousand Chinars (plane trees) had been planted there out of which only a few score remain there now.

During Akbar's stay in Kashmir, there was a terrible famine in 1597. Xavier, a Portuguese missionary who accompanied Akbar on his visit to Kashmir records:- "Many mothers were rendered destitute and having no means of nourishing their children exposed them for sale in the public places of the city. Moved to compassion, Xavier bought many of these little ones, who soon after receiving baptism, breathed their last. The shortage of food did not touch the court at all. The Emperor remained insensitive and inaccessible to the starving people."

It was from Xavier's account of that visit, that the western world first learnt that 'the Kingdom of Kashmir is one of the pleasantest and most beautiful countries to be found in the whole of India, we may even say in the East.'

It is sad to recall Akbar's dichotomy of love for the land but spite for its people. He accused poor Kashmiris of being 'infested with fleas, lice, gnats and flies' and deprecated Kashmiri music thus:

“with each note they seem to dig their nails into your liver.”

On Akbar's death, his son Jehangir succeeded as the Mughal Emperor in 1605. Undaunted by the Mughal power and provoked by the anti-Shia policy of the Mughal governors, Kashmiris made yet another bid to regain independence. The Mughal governor employed trickery and deceit by feigning sympathy with the cause of people. He held out hopes of sovereignty to them but worked successfully to sow disunity and dissension among the rebellious people. The revolt fizzled out and the governor ordered his troops to kill at sight any Chak, be he a soldier, peasant or artisan, that came in their way. Thus heaps of Chak corpses were piled up from dawn to dusk. With the annihilation of the Chaks, the struggle for independence was once more frozen.

In 1616, Kashmir was visited by plague which caused enormous mortality. The dead bodies were thrown into the rivers without observing any religious rites. This tragedy was followed by a devastating fire in Srinagar in 1619 which gutted 3000 houses and also the grand Jamia Masjid. The Masjid originally built by Sikandar in the 14th Century was reconstructed by Malik Haider Chadura, the famous Kashmiri historian, in the reign of Jehangir.

As a prince Jehangir had visited Kashmir twice with his father and had fallen in love with the place. 'If one were to take to praise Kashmir,' he wrote, 'whole books would have to be written.... It's pleasant meads and enchanting cascades are beyond all descriptions'....

As Emperor, Jehangir made many trips to the Valley and once said that he would rather lose his whole Kingdom than little Kashmir. Pelsaert, an official of the Dutch East India Company, who spent a number of years in Kashmir and India during Jehangir's reign, comments thus about the Emperor's passion for Kashmir: "The reason of the Emperor's special preference for this country is that when the heat in India increases his body burns like a furnace, owing to his consumption of excessively strong drink and opium....."

It was Jehangir's custom, during his travels to be

accompanied by Ustad Mansur, his favourite artist to record immediately anything particularly beautiful that crossed his path. In Kashmir, Mansur was kept busy. Jehangir, in his memoirs, writes :

“Flowers that are seen in Kashmir are beyond all calculation. Those that Ustad Mansur has painted are more than 100.”

The Mughal passion for garden-making reached its zenith in Jehangir's time when apparently no less than 777 gardens existed on the edge of the Dal Lake. Nur Jehan, the queen took to Kashmir every bit as enthusiastically as her husband and during the sixteen years of their married life, the royal couple explored the Valley most thoroughly. Pathar Masjid, the mosque that Nur Jehan built in Srinagar on the left bank of Jehlum, testifies to the queen's refined tastes. The beautiful springs at Achabal and Verinag inspired the royal couple to create beautiful gardens there. Nur Jehan was so enchanted with the Verinag spring that she put gold rings in the gills of fish in this spring. Nishat Garden was laid by Asif Khan, brother of Nur Jehan.

Shalimar Garden laid out on Jehangir's instructions, is the one place in Kashmir that everyone has heard of because of its elegance and beauty. It has been glamourised by Thomas Moore in his romantic Victorian poem called 'Lalla Rookh', a love story partly set in the Shalimar Garden. The author of the poem had never in his life been anywhere near Shalimar nor indeed Kashmir but his poem enshrined them both in the popular imagination forever. Then came another love poem with the memorable line --'pale hands I loved beside the Shalimar....' and so the praise of Shalimar Garden went on. Shalimar even became the name of an early French perfume.

In 1627, Jehangir and Nur Jehan spent what was to be their last summer in Kashmir. On their return journey, Jehangir died at a village, called Baramgala, in the Pir Panjal mountains. After burying his entrails in the courtyard of the Changas Serai, his body was eventually laid to rest in Lahore. Jehangir was succeeded by his son, Shah Jehan as the Emperor in 1628.

The Mughal governors ruling Kashmir during Jehangir's reign were oppressive and cruel. They revived the offensive custom of forced labour after it had been abolished by the Chaks; imposed harsh taxes on people; attached private fruit gardens disallowing their owners to use the fruit themselves and extorted money from poor people. At the time of collecting saffron, workers were compelled to work without any wages except a little salt. This caused great distress to people. These cruelties were brought to the notice of Shah Jehan by a Kashmiri poet in a striking poem:-

*"We have a plaint in your Majesty's court,
Saffron causes the sad and the sorry to laugh,
But here innocent people are made to weep on account of saffron."*

Shah Jehan dismissed Itiqad Khan, the governor, in 1632 and decreed that injustice and oppression must cease in Kashmir.

Ladakh, Baltistan and Kishtwar were conquered by the Mughals and annexed with their Empire in 1634. Shah Jehan was provoked to annex these regions because they served as sanctuaries to the freedom fighters of Kashmir.

Kashmir suffered great hardships in 1641 as a consequence of famine. The scarcity of food stuffs drove about 30,000 people to Lahore in search of food. Shia-Sunni riots broke out in the Maisuma area of Srinagar in 1635. This caused loss of life and destruction of property.

Shah Jehan visited Kashmir four times after his accession. He was instrumental in laying out the pretty Chashma Shahi garden around a natural spring. It affords a wonderful view of the Dal Lake below and the green hills behind. The water of this spring is still drunk reverently by visitors. Some of the greedy and rapacious politicians of our times have obtained water supply to their private homes from this spring.

Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Shah Jehan created a garden and a mosque in Srinagar which are among the loveliest of all the

Mughal relics. The garden is a magical, mysterious place, perched on the shoulder of a hill over-looking the Dal Lake and it fully deserves its romantic name of Pari Mahal or Fairy Palace. It was not intended to be a mere pleasure garden -it was built as a school for Dara Shikoh's spiritual guide, Mulla Akhund Shah. The mosque was built on the slopes of Hari Parbat hill but owing to negligence it is in a dilapidated state.

In the struggle to succeed Shah Jehan, Dara Shikoh, though the eldest son and the rightful heir, lost the throne - and his life - to Aurangzeb, his younger brother. Unlike his predecessors Aurangzeb visited Kashmir only once, in 1665. He was accompanied by the famous French doctor named Bernier who has graphically depicted the land and its people in his memoirs. The chosen few who accompanied the Emperor from the plains of India had 30,000 porters to carry their luggage across the mountains of Kashmir. Bernier records: 'I am charmed with Kashmir. In truth, the kingdom surpasses in beauty all that my warm imagination had anticipated. It is not without reason that the Mughals call Kashmir the terrestrial paradise of the Indies.' He further observed: 'The hills are so crowded with cows, goats and bees that Kashmir could literally be said to be flowing with milk and honey.' No, Monsieur Bernier, the subjugated Kashmiri has had no access to his own milk and honey! Bernier, apart from the natural beauty of the country was drawn to the people too: 'The Kashmiris are celebrated for wit and are much more intelligent and ingenious than the Indians. In poetry and science, they are not inferior to the Persians.... There are as handsome faces in Kashmir as in any part of Europe.'

Aurangzeb ordered that opium cultivation and its use in Kashmir should be discontinued. He also forbade music, dancing and drinking. He compelled people to wear trousers in order to cover the nakedness of their legs. The puritanical Emperor was blissfully insensitive to the fact that people walked bare-legged because of poverty and not due to ignorance of religious precepts.

Ghani Kashmiri, the greatest Persian poet of Kashmir, was a

contemporary of Aurangzeb. He was one of the few Persian poets outside Iran whose poetry and mastery of Persian diction was admired in Iran too. His poetry attracted the renowned Persian poet Saib to meet him in Srinagar and to learn from him the meaning of a Kashmiri expression occurring in one of his couplets. The Emperor, during his stay in Kashmir, ordered Ghani to attend the court. Asserting his independence and self respect, Ghani Kashmiri refused to become an imperial hanger-on and preferred death to submission.

The most important event, both historically and culturally, during Aurangzeb's reign was the arrival of the Sacred Hair of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) in Srinagar in 1699. One Khwaja Nur-ud-Din Ishbari, an affluent Kashmiri merchant had bought the relic in Bijapur (Deccan). A rousing reception was accorded to the holy relic in Srinagar when it was brought and subsequently lodged in its present picturesque site in the Hazratbal mosque.

During Aurangzeb's reign, Kashmir was ruled successively by 12 governors. The bigoted rulers engineered Shia-Sunni clashes in 1666 and 1685, which apart from causing loss of life and destruction of property, created disunity and distrust among the people. Shia-Sunni conflict in Kashmir is a legacy of slavery. The conflict was dictated by political compulsions of rulers who wanted to keep Kashmir socially and culturally fragmented in order to occupy this country securely. Theological niceties and hair splitting have never accounted for the recurrent sectarian clashes in Kashmir. The earthquake of 1670, the devastating fire of 1673 and the floods and consequent famine of 1683 added further misery to the hapless people of Kashmir.

The ancestors of the famous poet-philosopher Allama Iqbal, who were Kashmiri Brahmans of the Sapru caste, embraced Islam during Aurangzeb's reign.

After Aurangzeb's death in 1707, most of the power of the Mughal Empire was frittered away by his weak and quarrelling successors. During the 46 years, from the death of Aurangzeb to the

annexation of Kashmir by the kingdom of Kabul in 1753, the throne of Delhi was occupied by seven Mughal emperors. The instability in Delhi had a direct bearing on Kashmir too. As many as 57 governors and deputy governors administered Kashmir during this unstable period including two Kashmiris - Īnayatullah Khan as governor (1738-40) and Mir Muqim Kanth as deputy governor (1751). Once again Kashmir became the victim of greedy officials who could behave as they pleased and the all-too-familiar story of corruption, oppression and civil strife began all over again. At the instance of Mughal Emperor Farrukshiar, the Nehru family, forebears of 3 Indian prime ministers, emigrated from Kashmir in 1716.

Apart from the ruthlessness of the Mughal governors, the intrusion into the Valley of the marauding hill tribes of the lower Jehlum valley proved terrifying to the population. These tribes are known as Khokhas and Bombas. Whenever, they found the administration weak, they swooped upon the Valley. They came, killed, looted and returned. Their repeated pillage struck such terror in the minds of Kashmiris that their name became a byword for something very dreadful. Kashmiri mothers, to this day, frighten their children by using expressions like 'Khokh' and 'Bomba'. The predatory operations of these hill tribes continued until the mid-nineteenth century.

The terrible weakness of Mughal rule in India was revealed in 1739. The Persian leader, Nadir Shah marched an army all the way to Delhi, sacked the city, massacred 30,000 people and carried away to Persia a vast hoard of treasure including the Peacock Throne and the Kohinoor diamond. The Mughal Empire began breaking up, and, waiting on the sidelines were plenty of people longing to pick at the pieces. The fertile plains of Punjab became a battleground between the Sikhs, who had newly become a force to be reckoned with and the Afghans, who had acquired a dynamic leader in Ahmed Shah Abdali. In 1752, the Afghans wrested Punjab from the Sikhs in their third attempt and Ahmed Shah Abdali became the master of Punjab. Around this time, Mir Muqim Kanth, the Kashmiri deputy governor

was dismissed from service by the last Mughal governor of Kashmir, Abdul Qasim Khan. Kashmir was plunged into chaos by a multiplicity of circumstances including civil wars, Shia-Sunni riots of 1720, poverty and starvation consequent on terrible famines of 1724, 1735 and 1746. Thousands of people were compelled to quit Kashmir in search of safer and greener pastures.

In order to pay off old scores to the Mughals, Mir Muqim Kanth, accompanied by his crony, Zahir-ud-Din Diddamari asked Ahmed Shah Abdali to invade Kashmir and annex it to his dominions. The Afghan army invaded Kashmir where it was confronted by the Mughal forces at Shopian in 1753. The war lasted for 15 days. The Mughals were defeated, marking the end of their 166-year-old rule over Kashmir. The Afghan commander, Abdullah Khan entered Srinagar and thus established the Afghan rule in Kashmir in 1753.

CHAPTER 6

AFGHAN TYRANNY

For sixty six years (1753-1819 A.D.) Kashmir remained under the rule of five Afghan kings. The destinies of people of Kashmir were now guided from distant places like Kabul, Qandahar and Herat. The internecine quarrels for power in Afghanistan had their repercussions on the course of events in Kashmir during these sixty six years. Like the Mughal rulers, the Afghan kings also sent their governors to Kashmir to rule for them. In all twenty eight governors and deputy governors ruled over Kashmir during the period of Afghan occupation. In some cases governors ruled independently and a few served more than one term. But all governors were not Afghans nor were they all Muslims. The hallmark of the rule of majority of governors was unmitigated oppression of the Kashmiris. During the Afghan rule a number of Kashmiri pandits manoeuvred themselves into prominent positions in the country's administration.

Abdullah Khan, the first governor, ruled Kashmir for 6 months. It was sheer tyranny in which he killed many people and looted others. He deprived the pavilions of the famous Mughal gardens of their precious stones. He destroyed the economy of Kashmir by forcing 80 flourishing business houses to depart from Kashmir. The governor amassed a booty of one crore of rupees which he carried away to Kabul.

Abdullah Khan's successor, Khawja Abdullah, was assassinated by an Afghan Hindu named Sukh Jewan who proclaimed himself as the governor of Kashmir. This was resented by Afghan loyalists of the king in Kashmir. Sukh Jewan suppressed their revolt and declared his independence from Kabul.

The Afghan King, Ahmad Shah Abdali, furious at the conduct of the governor despatched an army of 30,000 soldiers to dislodge him but failed. Sukh Jewan appointed Mahanand Dhar, a

Kashmiri pandit, as his prime minister, at whose incitement he became an oppressor and subjected Kashmiris to considerable hardships. He banned the call to prayers (azan) and put a stop to cow-slaughter. He disbanded the Muslim soldiers and instead recruited Sikhs and Hindus from the Punjab in his army.

Ahmad Shah Abdali, after registering his victory over the Marathas in the battle of Panipat in 1761, turned his guns against the recalcitrant Sukh Jewan. A battle resulted near the Tosamaidan pass. Sukh Jewan was defeated, captured, blinded and trampled to death by an elephant.

In 1765, Noor-ud-Din Khan, the governor appointed Kailash Dhar as prime minister and Mir Muqim Kanth as chief secretary. The two Kashmiri nobles, unfortunately, failed to establish a working relationship because Dhar had in the past been one of Kanth's assistants. Dhar became overbearing towards Kanth and conspired to get the latter assassinated. The governor treated Dhar's vicious deed with indulgence because the latter had enormously enriched the former by oppressing his compatriots.

After Noor-ud-Din Khan's departure for Kabul, the governorship was snatched by Lal Khan, a Khakha chief of the lower Jehlum region of the Kashmir valley. He pillaged and tyrannised people for six months until the new governor, Khurram Khan arrived from Afghanistan. Kailash Dhar continued to enjoy the status of prime minister. Faquir Kanth, son of the slain Muqim Kanth, incensed by his father's murder, organised a successful rebellion against Khurram Khan and Kailash Dhar. The governor and his prime minister fled to Kabul. To avenge his father's death at the hands of Kailash Dhar, Faquir Kanth after assuming the office of governor, encouraged Khakhas and Bombas to wreak vengeance on the pandit community. Ahmad Shah Abdali despatched Noor-ud-Din from Kabul to put a stop to the misdeeds and cruelties of Faquir Kanth. Kanth escaped to Karnah and soon passed away after ruling Kashmir for seven months. Noor-ud-Din reestablished Abdali's sovereignty in Kashmir. Meanwhile in Kabul, Kailash Dhar induced

his patron, Khurram Khan to seek the governor's job in Kashmir for the second time. Although Abdali granted his wish, yet Khurram Khan again proved unequal to the task and was replaced as governor of Kashmir by Amir Khan.

Amir Khan's prime minister, Fazil Kanth avenged Muqim Kanth's murder by killing Kailash Dhar.

Amir Khan was a builder of repute. He raised a seven-storeyed mansion on Sona Lank in the Dal Lake. The structure built on Sona Lank previously by Zain-ul-Abidin had been destroyed by earthquakes. The governor also laid out Amirabad garden in the Nandpor village of Mirbahri. This garden was his favourite retreat. He also rebuilt the Amirakadal (bridge) which had been washed away by floods in 1772. Amir Khan also constructed the Sherghari fort on the left bank of Jehlum, in Srinagar. George Forster, an English officer of the East India Company and a contemporary comments: "Amir Khan was gay, voluptuous and much addicted to the pleasures of the table."

With Timur Shah's accession to the Afghan throne, following Abdali's death, governor Amir Khan proclaimed Kashmir's independence from Afghan suzerainty. Timur sent Karimdad Khan to reestablish Afghan suzerainty over Kashmir. Karimdad Khan defeated Amir Khan and assumed the job of governor of Kashmir. His rule was reckless and merciless. His tyranny spared none - high or low; Hindu or Muslim. He levied burdensome taxes on one and all - officials, landlords, merchants, peasants and shawl weavers. He cut down all mulberry trees growing luxuriantly in the Maisuma area of Srinagar and replaced them with poplar trees with a view to converting Maisuma into a race-course. The governor's chief advisor was Dila Ram Quli, a Kashmiri pandit. After ruling for 7 years Karimdad Khan was succeeded as governor by his 18-year-old son, Azad Khan.

Azad Khan was a paradoxical character. In spite of his terrible cruelties, he encouraged exportation of indigenous articles to India which brought in considerable wealth. He declared

himself independent of the Afghan king and at the same time he proclaimed the Sultan of Turkey his sovereign. For his frivolous conduct and arrogant behaviour he had to pay Rupees three lacs to the Afghan king as compensation. For small faults, Azad Khan inflicted capital punishment which earned him hatred and animosity of people. The Afghan king despatched a force from Kabul to overthrow Azad Khan, after his cruel rule had lasted two and a half years. Azad Khan's chief councillor was Dila Ram Quli who had served the former's infamous father too. It was during Azad Khan's rule over Kashmir that George Forster in 1783 records in his journey: "Azad Khan had become an object of such terror to Kashmiris that the casual mention of his name produced an instant horror and an involuntary supplication of the aid of their Prophet.... Azad Khan slit his doctor's stomach open when he failed to produce an instant cure for an eye disease.... he once amused himself taking pot shots with his musket at the crowd which had gathered to watch him pass." Forster found the people, 'dispirited, their way of living mean, their dress slovenly.' About Afghan vandalism he says: "Kashmir was testimony to the barbarity of Afghans who have reduced its elegant structures to ruins...."

Mirdad Khan who followed Azad Khan as governor proved more autocratic and grasping than his predecessors. He introduced oppressive taxes and got a lot of money at the cost of terrible privations to the people. Dila Ram Quli continued as the chief councillor and supported the governor in his merciless methods of administration.

Juma Khan, who succeeded Mirdad Khan retained Dila Ram Quli as his councillor and both proceeded to Kabul to render tribute-money from Kashmir. During Juma Khan's 4-year-rule, Kashmir witnessed a semblance of peace and order.

Mir Hazar Khan who succeeded as governor in 1793 refused to pay the tribute-money to Kabul and declared his independence. He caused great hardships to people, particularly the Shias and the Pandits. Many people were put in sackbags and then

drowned in the Dal Lake. A quick succession of governors occurred in Kashmir following the overthrow of Hazar Khan, after his 14-month-old rule. Out of the prevalent chaos and confusion, a Kashmiri Pandit named Nand Ram Tiku sought green pastures in Kabul. The Afghan King, Zaman Shah, appointed Tiku as a minister in Kabul. It is popularly believed in Kashmir that Tiku's influence and power emboldened him to mint coins in his own name in Kabul.

Abdullah Alkozai took over the authority in 1796 and appointed Sahaz Ram and Hara Das Tiku as his revenue collectors. The governor appointed a number of Indians to administer the country, to the exclusion of Kashmiris. Meanwhile, Haradas Tiku, abetted by his influential brother in Kabul, Nand Ram Tiku, got the governor sacked by the King. A fratricidal war among Afghan nobles was ignited by the conspiracy hatched by Tiku brothers. Ata Mohammad Khan, the sacked governor's brother, seized the governor's job, after a lot of bloodshed and arrested Hara Das Tiku for his treachery.

Ata Mohammad's tenure of five years is notorious for debauchery. He abducted, molested and raped women at will. Many parents were forced by circumstances to shave the heads of their daughters lest they fall a prey to the governor's carnal madness.

Back in Kabul, a protracted scramble for the throne, among the various claimants, was in evidence with its consequent repercussions in Kashmir. Ata Mohammad Barakzai battled his way to the governor's job in 1806. His father was killed back home in Afghanistan by King Shuja. On receiving this news, Ata Mohammad declared his independence. Shuja was infuriated and despatched a large army to defeat Ata Mohammad but failed. Troubles arose for Shuja in Kabul also where consequently he lost the throne. In sheer desperation, Shuja sought refuge in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Punjab. Ata Mohammad Barakzai wished to avenge his father's assassination at the hands of Shuja. In furtherance of this desire, Ata Mohammad cleverly requested Shuja to come to Kashmir where he would be treated as king till circumstances in Kabul became favourable for his triumphant return. Shuja walked into the trap and entered Kashmir

in 1813. He was imprisoned and kept in the Hariparbat fort which had been built by Ata Mohammad Barakzai in 1810.

Ata Mohammad restored peace in Kashmir which resulted in economic recovery. He was just and generous. He appointed Sahaz Ram, a Pandit, as his prime minister. Ata Mohammad struck coins in the name of Shaikh Noor-ud-Din, a highly revered Kashmiri saint.

The king of Aghanistan desired to punish Ata Mohammad for declaring independence and for offering refuge to fugitive Shuja. He commissioned Fath Khan, governor of Peshawar, to reduce Ata Mohammad to submission. To strengthen himself, Fath Khan sought Maharaja Ranjit Singh's help in return for an annual subsidy of Rs. eight lacs. The Maharaja accepted the stipulation and despatched 10,000 soldiers, under the command of Muhkam Chand, to assist Fath Khan. The combined troops entered Kashmir via the Mughal route. Ata Mohammad was defeated and, along with Shuja, surrendered to Muhkam Chand. Fath Khan re-established Afghan sovereignty over Kashmir.

Armed with the knowledge that Shuja's wife was in possession of the famous diamond, Kohi-Noor, and was prepared to part with it in return for her husband's safety, Ranjit Singh offered hospitality to Shuja at Lahore. After some hesitation, Shuja's wife surrendered the Kohi-Noor to Ranjit Singh who celebrated the event with a great banquet. Not content with his unique possession, Ranjit Singh forcibly deprived Shuja and his wife of all their jewellery and precious stones.

After Fath Khan ensured the allegiance of Kashmir to the Kabul throne, Azim Khan assumed the office of governor. His principal councillors were Pandit Sahaz Ram and Pandit Hara Das. The dispensation once again became oppressive.

Meanwhile, Ranjit Singh did not receive his second instalment of tribute of Rupees eight lacs from the governor of Kashmir. He was also desirous of annexing Kashmir with his dominion. In 1814, Ranjit Singh's troops invaded Kashmir via the

Mughal route. The Sikh forces were routed. In his haphazard retreat, Ranjit Singh not only lost his troops but his personal belongings and his favourite horse, too.

While the Afghan tyranny continued, almost unabated, for 66 years, nature did not lag behind in making the people miserable. An epidemic of cholera broke out in 1784, which took a toll of about 20,000 people. Flood of 1772 and famines of 1755, 1784 and 1804 accounted for considerable death and destruction. Severe earthquakes lasting for weeks to months occurred in 1776, 1784 and 1804 resulting in destruction of dwellings and considerable mortality.

Apart from their tyranny, the Afghan governors were adept at dividing the people on sectarian lines. Apart from the continual distrust between the Shias and the Sunnis during the Afghan rule, at least half a dozen major conflicts occurred between the followers of the two sects. These conflicts were always politically motivated and engineered by alien rulers. In the Shia-Sunni riots of 1786, the Pandit prime minister, Dila Ram Quli was the instigator of violence. He eventually paid the price for his misdeeds by getting beheaded in the Khanyar locality of Srinagar. The Afghan soldiers even burnt down the Imambaras at Zadibal and Hassanabad in 1786.

The ravages caused by the Afghans and various natural calamities were accentuated by frequent depredations of the unruly Khakha and Bomba tribes of the lower Jehlum region of the Kashmir valley. They plundered, murdered and returned.

Following his victory against Ranjit Singh, the governor of Kashmir, Azim Khan reappraised the loyalty of his pandit councillors. He suspected Pandit Hara Das' complicity with Ranjit Singh and consequently lynched him to death. Azim Khan had entrusted the job of revenue collection to three pandits viz, Birbal Dhar, Mirza Pandit and Sukh Ram. Birbal Dhar was a corrupt officer who had arrears of Rupees one lac outstanding against him. When called upon to pay the arrears, he demanded a respite on the surety offered by Mirza Pandit. Treachery followed corruption.

Birbal Dhar accompanied by his son, Rajakak Dhar

who was a tehsildar at Kulgam, escaped to Jammu. Birbal's wife and daughter-in-law were entrusted to the care of a Muslim milkman, Qudus Gojwari who concealed the two women in his cow-shed. On arrival in Jammu, Dhars contacted Raja Gulab Singh who in turn gave them letters of introduction to Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Meanwhile, Azim Khan got desperate to know the whereabouts of Birbal and his family. Munshi Trilok Chand, son-in-law of Birbal, obviously for a small favour, betrayed the family and divulged the whereabouts of Birbal's family. While under arrest, Birbal's wife committed suicide and the daughter-in-law was sent to Kabul. Qudus Gojwari and his family were brutally murdered and their belongings destroyed.

Meanwhile, Kabul was in the grip of civil strife. Azim Khan with a booty of Rs. two crores left Kashmir hurriedly for Kabul in order to help his elder brother Fath Mohammad to gain the Afghan throne. He left his younger brother, Jabar Khan in charge of Kashmir.

When Birbal Dhar heard of Azim Khan's departure for Kabul along with a sizeable portion of his troops, he urged Ranjit Singh to attack Kashmir. Dhar even offered to meet the expenses to be incurred in this operation which is a clear testimony to the riches he possessed through embezzlement in Kashmir. An army of 30,000 Sikhs, accompanied by Birbal Dhar, invaded Kashmir in 1819 and without encountering much resistance occupied Kashmir. Jabar Khan, the last Afghan governor, fled from Kashmir leaving behind memories of Afghan tyranny and a few pockets of Afghan habitation in Gutli Bagh, Ganderbal and in Baramulla and Anantnag districts.

Lahore was illuminated for 3 days in celebration of the event of Kashmir's annexation to Ranjit Singh's territories. A son born to Ranjit Singh's wife, Daya Kaur was named Kashmira Singh, as part of the celebrations! Ranjit Singh's forces entered the Shergari fort on 15 June, 1819 and ushered in the Sikh rule of Kashmir.

CHAPTER 7

SIKH BRUTALITY

Soon after he captured Lahore in 1799, Ranjit Singh had his eyes fixed on Kashmir. On the occasion of his son's marriage in 1812, Ranjit Singh obtained British approval for invasion and annexation of Kashmir to his dominion. The British had their own strategic interests in the region. They apprehended collusion between Afghans and Czarist Russia in order to invade British India. It was, therefore, in the British interests to strengthen Ranjit Singh and his dominion which could act as a buffer between them and the Afghans.

When Ranjit Singh took over Kashmir in 1819, the people found themselves out of the Afghan frying pan into the Sikh fire. The degeneration of Kashmiris which had started during the Afghan rule got further accentuated. Poverty and hunger continued unabated. Religious persecution and economic deprivation were characteristic of the Sikh rule. Miseries and indignities were heaped on the Kashmiris. Culturally, educationally and morally Kashmir reached its nadir.

While the Sikh forces occupied the Valley, the chieftains of the surrounding hill areas of Poonch and Muzaffarabad offered persistent resistance to Ranjit Singh's forces.

Sikh rule in Kashmir lasted for 27 years. During this period 10 governors - 3 Sikhs, 5 Hindus and finally 2 Muslims administered the country one after another. Diwan Chand was the first governor. The very entry of the Sikh soldiers into Kashmir signalled total breakdown of law and order. Every soldier acted in the way he liked, considering himself to be the master of the situation. Subject to no discipline and encouraged by the rapacious conduct of their own senior officers, the pursuit of loot took the soldiers to the farthest corners of the Valley. Gold, silver, nickle, pashmina, wood

carving and even sheep and fowls did not escape their plunderous pursuit. It looked as if hordes of hungry vultures had descended upon the land. There must have hardly been a Muslim home which did not suffer; a breadwinner killed, a female abducted or household goods and valuables robbed away. The governor himself set the pattern for lawlessness. Thousands of Muslims abandoned their homes and escaped towards mountains while many a leading families of Srinagar sent their womenfolk to far flung villages. Srinagar, which had been christened as Kashmir nearly 500 years ago, was once again introduced as the name of the capital city.

In spite of a continuous flow of presents from the governor to Ranjit Singh, the latter recalled the former to Lahore and admonished him for his tyranny. In order to escape punishment for his lawless rule, Diwan Chand presented an amount of Rs. 25 lacs in cash to the Sikh sovereign. He had extracted this money from the hapless people of Kashmir in a few months of his stay there as governor. Apart from Ranjit Singh's share one can safely assume that Diwan Chand himself, the soldiery and the revenue collectors must have taken their own share of the loot. As anticipated by Diwan Chand, no action was taken against him. One of the Kashmiri satirists obviously referring to the rule of one-eyed Ranjit Singh lamented :

“when these are the days of eyelessness, should there be a plaint against their tyranny.”

Moti Ram succeeded Diwan Chand as the governor. He served for two terms. The first lasted for 14 months. He closed the Jamia Masjid of Srinagar to public prayers. The Muslims were forbidden to give the call to prayers (*Azan*). Many other mosques were closed and taken over by the government. Pather Masjid, constructed by Empress Noor Jehan was converted into a grain store. The shrine of Shah Hamdan at Khanqah-I-Mualla was ordered to be razed to the ground, but for a change, better sense prevailed on the governor and the order was withdrawn.

Cow slaughter, prevalent for centuries was declared a crime punishable by death. Muslims were actually hanged, dragged

through the city of Srinagar and even burnt alive for having slain cows. Madin Kawoosa and his son-in-law Ghulam Mohammad, respectable citizens of Srinagar, suspected of cow-killing were hanged without any trial; their dead bodies were then dragged through the streets. Samad Baba of Chattabal was arrested on the charge of suspected cow-slaughter. The governor personally led a force which surrounded Baba's house. The family consisted of 17 members, including women and children. All the 17 members were tied up with ropes and consigned to flames publicly amidst thousands of wailing Muslim men, women and children. Twelve members of the family of one Ghulam Mohammad Mir of Hawal were similarly burnt alive in a heap of cow dung on the charge of cow slaughter (Tarikh Hassan pages 762,767).

The Muslims were evicted from their lands which was distributed among the non-Muslims. Even these Muslims who retained their lands did not cultivate it because they were deprived of the fruits of their labour. The revenue collectors, led by Birbal Dhar, made heavy exactions, even against the wishes of the governor. Birbal Dhar, however, maintained friendly relations with the Sikh soldiers and regularly sent presents to the Sikh ruler at Lahore. Through a conspiracy hatched by the Pandits, governor Moti Ram was recalled and replaced by Hari Singh Nalva whose 2 year-old rule was tyrannical. He made forts at Uri and Muzaffarabad and constructed the gurdwaras of Mattan, Baramulla and Kathi Darwaza, Srinagar.

It may be recalled that Guru Nanak Devji, the founder of Sikh faith, had visited Kashmir in 1517 and founded the gurdwaras at Mattan and Anantnag. Guru Hargobind Singh, the sixth guru, visited Kashmir in the early 17th century and founded gurdwaras at Shaji Marg, Kathi Darwaza, Singhpora, Baramulla, Uri, Kathai and Muzaffarabad.

The vast fortune that Hari Singh Nalva had accumulated in Kashmir was confiscated by Ranjit Singh. Moti Ram was sent back as governor. The pandit community was all powerful. Birbal Dhar had

appointed his relations to almost all the posts with the result that the administration had passed into his hands. Moti Ram became tired of pandit intrigues and their large scale corruption. He ordered a thorough audit of accounts which revealed that Birbal Dhar had embezzled a lot of money. Ranjit Singh had summoned Birbal to Lahore in 1821 to inquire about his plunder but the Dogra courtiers saved Birbal from Ranjit's wrath. Subsequently, Ranjit Singh became convinced that Birbal was not only looting the people but was also robbing the government. He was dismissed from service and his property was confiscated. He was jailed, where he died. Killam, an ex-judge of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court, in his book, "History of Kashmiri pandits", laments Birbal's death as under :-

"It is a strange irony of fate that he who made it possible for the Sikh ruler to occupy the country and who greatly contributed to the strengthening of administration should have died as a prisoner." Killam should have been judicious enough not to condone corruption and should not have defended a traitor who was instrumental in imposing an alien rule over his motherland simply to further his personal and clannish interests.

Oppressed all round, hundreds of Muslim families fled from Kashmir. Their descendants are to this day found in the Punjab and other regions of the subcontinent. It was during these times that two brothers from Wathore, about 10 kms from Srinagar, emigrated to Dacca and in course of time founded the wellknown Nawab family of Dacca that glories in having produced celebrities, including Khawja Nazim-ud-Din, the second governor-general of Pakistan.

Moorcroft, an English veterinary surgeon, visited Kashmir in 1822-23 and records :-

"Butchers, bakers, boatmen, venders of fuel, public notaries, scavengers and prostitutes - all paid a tax. Everywhere the people are in the most abject condition; exorbitantly taxed and subjected to every kind of extortion and oppression by the Sikh officers. Not more than one-sixteenth of the cultivable land is in

cultivation and the inhabitants, starving at home, are driven in great numbers to the plains of India. Every shawl was taxed at 26% of its estimated value, besides a heavy duty on the imports of raw materials and every shop and workman connected with shawl manufacture was taxed." No matter how far outside Srinagar Moorcroft went, the Sikhs seemed to be in evidence. At Sopore he saw the Sikh soldiers levying taxes; in a wretched little village he saw the tax gatherers taking away no less than 9/10th of the rice crop. The sikhs were almost literally killing the goose that laid the golden egg - in their greed to squeeze the maximum revenue from Kashmir. They were reducing the country to a state of such extreme poverty that, Moorcroft worried about the Valley becoming depopulated through starvation, disease and emigration. Driven to despair, large numbers of people were escaping from the Valley, inspite of the fact that it was illegal to leave without permission. Moorcroft witnessed a party of 500 Kashmiris trying in vain to leave their country. It did not take long for the Sikh officials escorting Moorcroft to grab hold of these 'half-naked and miserably emaciated' peasants and force them to work as unpaid porters, roping them together by day and tying them up at night to prevent them escaping. At the customs post on the border, the relentless Sikh officials tried to force these pathetic, bewildered Kashmiris to pay for permission to pass.

The Sikhs seemed to look upon the Kashmiris as little better than cattle. The murder of a native by a Sikh was punished by a fine of 16 Rupees, of which four Rupees were paid to the family of the deceased if a Hindu, and two Rupees if he was a Muslim; the balance was pocketed by the rulers.

Kripa Ram was governor of Kashmir from 1827 to 1831. He was nicknamed Kripa '*Shroin*'. '*Shroin*' is a Kashmiri word which means the jingling sound produced by bangles and anklets worn by women. Kripa earned this nickname because he was totally given to the pursuit of pleasure and spent most of his time in the company of dancing girls, prostitutes and women abducted from various parts of the valley. Even the boat paddlers of his official

barges were exclusively women. Sheikh Mohi-ud-Din from Hoshiarpur, Punjab was Kripa's favourite advisor. He had amassed a huge fortune in Kashmir and had buried a treasure of Rupees 9 lacs in his native village at Hoshiarpur and given it the appearance of a grave. On learning about this treasure, Ranjit Singh got the so-called grave demolished and recovered the treasure.

An earthquake of unprecedented severity shook the whole Valley on 26 June 1828. The shocks persisted for nine months though their severity decreased after 3 months. Initially 100-200 shocks occurred everyday and the inhabitants lived in the open fields for months together. Ten thousand people are believed to have died and 12,000 houses destroyed in this calamity. When the earthquake ceased, cholera took over resulting in a fresh spate of mortality. The dead were wrapped in grass instead of cloth because of its non-availability. Gravely insensitive to the distress of people consequent upon the earthquake and the epidemic of cholera, Kripa Ram sent a sum of Rs. one lac as present on the occasion of marriage of a courtier's son at Lahore!

Bhima Singh took over as governor from Kripa Ram in 1831. Pandit Ganesh Dhar became head of the revenue department. During the month of Muharram in 1248 A.H. (1832 A.D), a Shia-Sunni riot broke out in Srinagar, causing considerable human and material loss to the parties. As on previous occasions, Hassan-Abad and Zadibal areas of the city bore the brunt of sectarian clashes.

Jacquemont, a French naturalist visited Kashmir in 1831. He was distressed at the misery of people and the cruelty of their Sikh rulers. "Kashmir surpassed all imaginable poverty." He particularly disliked the governor because the man bragged to him that in his first year of office he had hanged 200 Kashmiris for no better reason than to frighten all the others. The people were now so cowed, the governor boasted, that it was only necessary to hang one or two here and there to keep the peace. Extreme poverty led to sale of women-folk. Jacquemont records that little girls showing promise of good

looks were sold at the age of 8 and exported to the Punjab and other parts of India to stock the harems of Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus. "They are sold by their parents for an average price of 50 or 60 francs."

Prince Sher Singh, Ranjit's son, took over the governorship early 1832. He entered Kashmir via Muzaffarabad. On reaching Baramulla, he fancied the idea of a river journey upto Srinagar. Owing to unusually severe winter, most of the river was frozen. Sher Singh insisted on travelling by the boat. Thousands of Kashmiris were forcibly driven out of their homes and compelled to break the ice all the way upto Srinagar, a distance of more than 50 kilometres, to enable the fulfilment of Sher Singh's desire. Scores of poor people lost their lives while hundreds suffered from frost-bites.

Joseph Wolff, an Englishman visiting Kashmir in 1832 met women and children, 'howling and weeping'. When he asked why they were leaving Kashmir, they replied: "on account of the tyranny of the rulers... We are bought and sold like pieces of bread." On Wolff's intervention, Sher Singh allowed hundreds of shawl weavers with their families to emigrate from Kashmir. During Sher Singh's rule, a terrible famine overtook the Valley resulting in reduction of population from 8 lacs to 2 lacs only.

The Sikh rulers encountered resistance to their tyranny in the Valley from Galwans. The Chaks who had bravely resisted the Mughal occupation of Kashmir were the ancestors of Galwans. The Sikhs had a difficult time with the Galwans because the latter resorted to hit and run tactics resulting in loss of life and material to the Sikhs. One day, on receiving information that some Galwans had assembled near the alluvial plain of Damodar, present site of Srinagar airport, a large force was sent to track them. Eight Galwans were killed on the spot while 17 others were hanged on the Amirakadal (bridge).

Mian Singh was appointed governor in 1834 and ruled over Kashmir for nearly 7 years. In a letter to the governor, Ranjit Singh expressed his longing to 'visit Kashmir, once in his

lifetime, to enjoy the delight of wandering through the gardens of Kashmir, fragrant with almond-blossoms and sitting on the fresh green turf.' Ranjit Singh, unfortunately for him, never realised his wish. The governor got prepared a special Kashmir carpet with a green background dotted with little pink spots which looked like green turf with pink petals of almond blossom. This masterpiece of a carpet was presented to Ranjit Singh at Lahore who was ecstatic to see the beautiful design executed in such artistic excellence. He rolled on the carpet enthusiastically, feigning to be rolling on the real Kashmir turf. The chief weavers of this exclusive carpet- Fazljan, Jabbar Khan and Jamal Joo- were given a reward of a pair of golden bracelets each, by the Maharaja.

Three Europeans - Hugal, Vigne and Henderson, visited Kashmir in 1835. They have recorded the plight of the country and its people. Hugal comments:- "All that I saw during my stay in Kashmir was the ruins of what once had been palaces, old dilapidated houses and streets of unexampled filthiness." Vigne writes: "A great number of Chinara trees have been destroyed by the Sikhs. The governor cut down Chinars in the Shalimar garden and sold them. In the time of the hated Afghans, no man could cut down a Chinara, under a penalty of Rs. 500, even on his own ground."

The food of the majority of people consisted of boiled rice and vegetables but lots of people lived on '*Singhara*' (water nut) for 5 months in the year and many others on '*nadru*' (stem of *Nymphae lotus*) for nearly 8 months. This is a striking proof of the poverty of people during the Sikh rule. The practice of forced labour which had been, in some measure, introduced by the Afghans, was ruthlessly continued by the Sikhs. Even an ordinary Sikh soldier could command any native to do any work for him and to carry his luggage anywhere without any remuneration.

The Sikh rule thoroughly demoralised the people. All their old glory, grandeur and heroism had vanished. Yet, in their demoralisation, the Kashmiris were full of contempt for their oppressive rulers. Hugal notes: "A Kashmiri would put up with any

wrong rather than seek redress from his Sikh masters, as he is obliged to pay the judge without the slightest prospect of getting justice." The governor sought an interview and offered many presents to Sida-Bayu, a revered saint of the time but the latter returned the presents and refused to grant an interview as "he had nothing to do with the oppressor of his country."

A new settlement named Basant Bagh on the right bank of Jehlum was constructed by Mian Singh. Its beautiful ghat is composed of limestone slabs which the governor brought from the mosque of Hassan Abad.

Mian Singh's governorship saw the death of Ranjit Singh in 1839, the succession and death of Kharak Singh and that of his son Navnihal Singh and the accession of Sher Singh as the Maharaja. On 18 April 1841, a group of 50 mutinous soldiers whose pay was in arrears, broke into Mian Singh's residence in Srinagar and put him to death. This incident fomented a popular uprising in Kashmir against the Sikh rule. Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu aided the Sikh soldiers to quell the mutiny. The popular uprising in Kashmir served as an eye-opener to Maharaja Sher Singh. Realising that unbridled oppression of the Muslims was fraught with grave consequences, the Maharaja appointed Sheikh Mohi-ud-Din, a Punjabi Muslim, as governor of Kashmir in 1842. The first official act of the governor was the restoration to Muslims of the Jamia Masjid in Srinagar which had been closed since 1819. During Sheikh's rule 16,000 peasants were sent to Ladakh, on forced labour, to carry provisions for the soldiers. Hardly a few of these poor people returned home, the great majority having perished on the way. Shaikh Bagh, a new settlement near Amirakadal was founded by the governor. Baron Schonberg, a German visitor to Kashmir during Shaikh's rule wrote: "I have been in many lands, but nowhere did the condition of the human being present a more saddening spectacle than in Kashmir." He narrates that his coolies were paid Rupees 6 each from Kashmir to Lahore, out of which Rupees 4 each will pass into the governor's hands. "The artisans and weavers of shawls are in

an equally miserable condition. The daily wage of each is 4 annas, of which he must pay 2 annas to the governor. The '*Singhara*' (water-nut) which grows naturally in the lakes is subjected to a tax in kind and which forms a stock sold out at an exorbitant price afterwards."

Following the death of Maharaja Sher Singh in 1843, his 6 year old son, Dalip Singh was proclaimed Maharaja at Lahore. Maharani Jind Kaur became the regent. In Kashmir, Imam-ud-Din succeeded his father Shaikh Mohi-ud-Din, as governor in 1845. The political events moved rapidly in the Punjab. The Sikh army became restive and the ministers who ruled in the name of Dalip Singh thought it expedient to encourage the army to attack the British. The battle that followed became known as the First Sikh War. It was narrowly won by the British. They imposed a heavy fine on the Sikhs which they were unable to pay in cash. The Sikhs instead offered Kashmir, Jammu, Ladakh, and Baltistan which were part of the Sikh territory. Kashmir apart, the other territories offered to the British were administered by Raja Gulab Singh, a favourite of the late Ranjit Singh. Gulab Singh offered to pay the indemnity on behalf of the Sikh nation provided he could keep the territories he administered for ever and add Kashmir to them. Gulab Singh's intrigue and treachery coupled with British unscrupulousness led to the infamous Treaty of Amritsar and rise of the Dogras.

CHAPTER 8***DOGRA OPPRESSION***

The term Dogra is essentially geographical rather than ethnic. It is applied to the people who inhabit the hilly areas of Jammu region between the rivers Ravi and Chenab. The Dogra dynasty of Ranjit Dev ruled the Jammu principality since 1742 AD. The Sikh ruler of Lahore, Ranjit Singh occupied Jammu in 1809 AD after overthrowing the Dogra rulers. A distant and obscure relation of Ranjit Dev named Kasura Singh, of Rajput caste, had 3 sons - Gulab, Dhyan & Suchet. Before Jammu fell into the hands of Ranjit Singh, Gulab and Dhyan had got well trained in the art of soldiery and had acquired mastery in the use of firearms. Not satisfied with living in penury, Gulab and Dhyan sought livelihood in Lahore. The two brothers were introduced to Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who pleased with their appearance, employed them as personal attendants on a salary of Rs. 90 each per month. On account of their intelligence and hardwork they soon became accomplished courtiers. Meanwhile the two brothers brought their third brother, 15-year-old Suchet from Jammu and placed him in attendance on the Maharaja. Because of the good looks of Dhyan and Suchet, the gay Maharaja developed intimacy with the two brothers. Without offending the sense of decency of the reader, it is sufficient to quote K.M. Panikkar, the famous Indian diplomat-historian: "The court of Ranjit Singh was dissolute in the extreme.....The morals of the Lahore Darbar were such as to shock even a corrupt age". (The founding of Kashmir State P:156).

A slave of his own passions, Ranjit Singh became a tool in the hands of the Dogra brothers. They rose meteorically and in 1822 AD, Gulab Singh became the Raja of Jammu; Dhyan Singh was appointed Prime Minister at Lahore and Suchet assumed the title of Raja of Ramnagar. Following the death of Ranjit Singh in 1839 AD,

the Dogra brothers were strongly entrenched in power and their eyes were glued to the Lahore throne. By now Gulab Singh had already occupied Ladakh, Baltistan, Kishtwar, Bhaderwah, ostensibly as a feudatory of the Lahore Darbar. Gulab Singh and his brothers robbed the Maharaja, in 1841, of all his treasures, including silver money, gold mohurs, valuable trinkets and jewellery. A part of this stolen treasure enabled Gulab Singh, 5 years later, to purchase Kashmir.

Following Ranjit Singh's death, the Sikh army had become turbulent, corrupt and indisciplined. There was no one among the Sikhs capable of forging unity in the ranks of the Khalsa. The British seized this opportunity and virtually thrust a war on the Sikhs in 1846. The British defeated the Sikhs.

On his frequent visits to the Kashmir Valley, Gulab Singh had taken note not only of the splendour of the region but also of the natural wealth of the territory. He had also realised that the convenient routes to the northern regions, already in his possession, were via Sonamarg and Bandipur and not through the difficult passes of Kishtwar. Gulab Singh, therefore, had his greedy eyes fixed on the territory of Kashmir long before the Treaty of Amritsar. To achieve his objective in Kashmir, Gulab Singh secretly tried and succeeded in cultivating the friendship of influential English officers. In spite of being a feudatory of the Sikh Maharaja, Gulab Singh aided the British in their war against the Sikhs with a view to dismember the Khalsa kingdom and annex Kashmir to his territories.

Consequent upon the defeat of the Sikhs in 1846, two treaties were concluded. By virtue of the first treaty signed at Lahore on 9.3.1846, the Sikhs paid the British Rs. 50 lacs in cash and also handed over the territory of Kashmir in lieu of one crore rupees of indemnity. The second treaty signed at Amritsar on 16.3.1846, between the British Government and Raja Gulab Singh made over to the latter for Rs. 75 lacs all the hilly territories of the erstwhile Sikh Kingdom situated to the east of river Indus and west of Ravi. The amount that Gulab Singh agreed to pay was really the indemnity of a crore rupees imposed on the Sikh Kingdom. As the British retained

possession of Kulu, Mandi and Kangra, a sum of Rs. 25 lacs was deducted from the indemnity of Rs. one crore. So by promising to pay Rs. 75 lacs, Gulab Singh was formally invested, at Amritsar, with the title of His Highness, the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir. The Maharaja eventually paid the money to the British Government in 42 instalments over a period of 4 years.

The Treaty of Amritsar consisting of 10 articles, makes no mention of the rights, interests or the future of the people of the State. It was a commercial deal condemning Kashmiris to perpetual bondage. The Kashmiri became a stranger in his own country. All these odious developments occurred beyond the borders of Kashmir and behind the backs of the people concerned. The Treaty negates British professions of justice and fairplay and it must go down in history as a massive indictment of the British character. It shall remain an indelible stain upon the history of British rule in India. Hardinge, the Governor-General of India responsible for the sale of a nation with at least 3 thousand year-old history, stands condemned in Kashmir history as a vendor of human flesh. Allama Iqbal, the celebrated son of Kashmir, writing in the twenties of the present century, complains to the League of Nations thus:

باد صبا اگر جبینوا گزر کنی حرفے زابہ مجلس اقوام باز گوے
دمہقان و کشت و جوئے خیابان فروختند توئے فروختند و چہ ارزاں فروختند

*O breeze! if you pass by Geneva,
Convey this message of ours to the League of Nations
They sold peasants, crops, rivers and gardens;
In short, sold a whole nation and so cheap at that!*

Robert Thorpe, a young British army officer, whose mother hailed from Kashmir comments on the Treaty of Amritsar:- "For purposes entirely selfish, the British sold millions of human beings into the absolute power of one of the meanest, most avaricious,

cruel and unprincipled of men that ever sat upon a throne. Nor, was it a ruler only whom the British forced upon a reluctant people but the crowd of rapacious ministers, courtiers and hangers-on who followed the fortunes of Gulab Singh. These people, raised like the Maharaja, from the lowest classes and invested with titles of Diwan and Wazir, descended upon Kashmir like a flock of hungry vultures and swept away the prosperity and happiness of its people". Wakefield in the *Happy Vale* Observes: "The huckstering spirit that so often prevails the British national policy and which caused Napoleon to apply to us the term of a nation of shopkeepers was dominant in this case....The Supreme Government sold this fair province to Gulab Singh for a paltry sum of Rs. 75 lacs".

LI. Col. Torrens, a British army officer looks at the Treaty thus: "Poor Kashmir ! When after so many vicissitudes of slavery to a foreign yoke, the hand of a powerful, just and merciful Government acquired the territory by force of arms in fair fight, and it seemed that at last its condition was about to be ameliorated, its old ill-luck struck by it still ! That hand had an itching palm and they were again sold into the hands of the philistines".

Human history knows, perhaps no more than 2 other instances, where territories have been sold. Manhattan Indians sold the city of Newyork to the Dutch settlers in 1614 AD for about 24 dollars. Secondly, the USA purchased Alaska with a population of 60,000 people from the Russians for 7 million dollars in 1867 AD. These two sales were, however, not private nor were they made to a particular person or family as was the case in the Treaty of Amritsar.

After purchasing the territory of Kashmir, Gulab Singh was naturally anxious to acquire its possession. In the meanwhile, the news of the sale deed trickled into the Valley. The local population was opposed to yet another phase of slavery. Consequently, three petitions against the sale of Kashmir were addressed to Hardinge, the Governor-General. The Hill Chiefs stated in their petition that they found no other remedy besides fighting against Gulab Singh. The inhabitants of Kashmir, both Muslims and Pandits expressed grave

disquiet at the British policy of selling Kashmir to Gulab Singh as they had learnt of Gulab Singh's tyranny unleashed against his subjects in Jammu, Ladakh and Baltistan. The British Government was unmoved by the petitions.

Gulab Singh moved his troops to Kashmir to take possession of Srinagar from Sheikh Imam-ud-Din, the last governor of the Lahore Durbar. The Sheikh supported by the Hill Chiefs and strengthened by a mass uprising against Gulab Singh, refused to acknowledge Dogra authority over Kashmir. A pitched battle was fought, in Maisuma, Srinagar between the Dogras and the local forces. The Dogras were routed. Gulab Singh turned to the British Government for assistance to enable him to take possession of his new kingdom. The British ordered the Governor to yield obedience to the new sovereign of Kashmir. The Governor complied. Following the Governor's capitulation, the local people resisted Gulab Singh's entry into the Valley with the help of axes, knives and shovels but in vain. Gulab Singh entered Srinagar on 9.11.1846 and occupied the Sherghari Palace.

The Maharaja declared himself as the owner of all lands, forests and mountains and did not allow proprietary rights to the real owners. The land was held by the subjects as tenants for which they paid land revenue to him. Gulab Singh's first care was to consolidate his power and extort his revenue by all conceivable means. His desire for money was so compulsive that before he heard a petition from his subjects, he would demand one rupee as a 'present'.

The descendants of the Chak warriors, popularly known as Galwans, offered resistance to Gulab Singh's rule on and off. They were banished as a community to Bunji in Dardistan where they faced extermination from starvation and disease. Gulab Singh's repressive measures were barbaric. Vigne, an English barrister, records in his Travels: "Some of his prisoners were flayed alive under his own eyes. He ordered one or two of the skins to be stuffed with straw... The figure was then planted on the wayside that passers by might see it; Gulab Singh called his son's attention to it and told him to take a lesson

in the art of governing". Gulab Singh was naturally feared by his subjects.

The people were reduced to squalid poverty on account of excessive taxation. Saffron, shawl and wood became a government monopoly. On the birth of every lamb, the owner must pay a tax of one anna; the birth of a calf earned the Government 4 annas. Each betrothal cost the family one rupee. Every shop paid a tax of 3 annas a day; a fishing boat paid 4 annas per day. A walnut tree fetched a tax of 10 annas per year. Seven-eighths of the land produce reached Gulab Singh. After the grain was harvested, it was stacked until the Maharaja choose to fix the rate of tax, which could mean 2-3 months after harvesting. In the meantime, the poor wretches, if they had none of the previous year's grain left, were obliged to subsist on turnips and herbs. The shawl manufacturers paid tax both on the raw material as well as on the finished product. Circumcision was taxed. Gulab Singh's tax payers included grave diggers, cow herds, porters, menial workers, shoe makers, boatmen, leech sellers, basket makers. Other taxes in force included the following:-

- 1) Each house was taxed ranging between 4-20 annas per year, depending on the number of inmates.
- 2) Fruit: $\frac{3}{4}$ of produce of walnut, apple, pear, apricot, almond went to the Government.
- 3) Animal tax: From each village 2 or 3 sheep or goat per year were taken by the Government.
- 4) One blanket of homespun woollen cloth from each village per year was extracted by the Government.
- 5) Ghee: From each cow half a seer of ghee per year was the Govt. share

- 6) Fowls: 10 fowls per house per year.
- 7) Honey: 2/3 of produce was taken by the Govt.
- 8) Every shawl-maker paid Rs. 47.50 per labourer per year to the Govt..
- 9) Land Sale: 4.50 annas per rupee of the amount of consideration.
- 10) Marriage Tax: Rs. 3 for the first marriage; for the 2nd marriage or 3rd marriage Rs. 100
- 11) Sale of girls for prostitution: Rs. 100 was realised for permission to sell a girl and another Rs. 100 for permitting her into the trade.
- 12) Prostitutes: Annual Tax of 80-100 Rs. per head.
- 13) Horse Tax: 50% of its price.

The above is a catalogue of authorised taxes. Apart from this, the corrupt and greedy officials took their own pound of flesh. Obviously, everything except water and air was brought under taxation.

Gulab Singh did not spare even the Buddhist monasteries. Those at Hemis, Chimra, Thiqse, Pitak, Gawan and Lama Yaru were charged Rs. 90 each. 25 smaller monasteries were taxed at the rate of Rs. 25 each. Peasants were taxed in kind for the Maharaja's guests and for the maintenance of temples. Gulab Singh's greed was insatiable. He virtually sucked the very lifeblood of Kashmiris. The first victims of the policy of repressive exactions were the shawl-makers of Srinagar. Their stocks were seized; houses and shops searched and their goods deposited in the treasury. They closed down their shops and most of them abandoned the trade and a good number fled the country.

The dormant British conscience felt uneasy at the distress caused to the Kashmiris by Gulab Singh's oppressive rule. A British officer based at Lahore, Reynell Taylor, was deputed to Srinagar to investigate the grievances of people. A meeting of the people of Srinagar was convened at Maisuma on 21st June 1847 at which Taylor enquired whether the people wanted Gulab Singh's rule to continue. The Governor of Kashmir, Raj Kak Dhar cajoled and bribed a few leading Muslims who told Taylor that all was well with their community. This incident gave a new lease of life to the oppressive rule of Gulab Singh.

On the one hand, Gulab Singh tormented the people of Kashmir and on the other he was hand in glove with the British imperialism in India. When the war of independence broke out in 1857, the Maharaja made a cash donation of Rs. 10 lacs to the British Indian Government. He also sent a contingent comprising 2000 infantry, 200 cavalry and six guns under the personal command of his son, Ranbir Singh, to help crush the Indian uprising. After the failure of the revolt, the British, in recognition of his services, knighted Ranbir Singh, who in the meantime had acceded to the throne of Kashmir following Gulab Singh's death.

Gilgit was conquered by Ranbir Singh in 1860 and annexed with what became the Maharaja's State of Jammu and Kashmir. The British Government appointed George Buhler as a political officer in the State. He collected 800 Sanskrit manuscripts from the Valley and is renowned for his pioneering work on Sanskrit literature. In early eighties, of the last century, the designation of political officer was changed to that of 'Resident', with Oliver John assuming the charge as first 'Resident'.

Shia-Sunni riots were engineered by the government on a massive scale in Srinagar, Badgam and Magam in 1873. Hundreds of houses were razed to the ground while the Governor's 'helpful' advice was, "well, put them ablaze". A huge fire destroyed Tankipora locality of Srinagar in 1876.

During Ranbir Singh's rule the Pandits, in conformity with

the Hindu theory of transmigration of soul, declared that Gulab Singh's soul had entered a bee! A decree went forth in consequence that bees were henceforth sacred and must not be destroyed. A few weeks later, some Brahmans reported that a bee had been eaten up by a fish. The result of this priestly fabrication was the prohibition of fish as food lest some irreverent Muslim might lure the royal fish! Lucullus in his book *Kashmir Raj*, published in 1868 comments:- "An English officer observed 3 half starved natives chained naked on the bank of river Jehlum. Each of them wore a necklace of stinking fish, and they had been left thus for 3 days and 3 nights already without food or drink. What was their offence? They had been driven by hunger to catch a few fish, in defiance of the royal decree and had been found out.... It cannot be concealed that Kashmir is one vast slave worked plantation".

Montgomery, then Lt. Governor of Punjab visited Kashmir during Ranbir Singh's rule and observed: "It is true that we sold Kashmir to the late Gulab Singh, but we surely did not sell its people into slavery. And we have no doubt that in the worst days of the Slave Trade, the condition of the Negroes of the West Indies sugar and cotton plantations and of the Southern States of America, was very much better than the lot of the Kashmiris has been and still seems to be.... and we are morally responsible for the grave evils arising from the barbarous system of misgovernment".

The Pandits had all the privileges and authority in Kashmir. The ill-treatment of people was as much resorted to by the Maharaja as by the Pandit officials. In the heavy exactions, the pandit revenue collectors would grab a handsome share for themselves. If a peasant wore clean clothes and a white turban, he was instantly accused by the officials of being rich and was doubly taxed accordingly. This forced people not to look respectable; to be shabby was the fashion of the day. The poor people were entirely at the mercy of heartless officials. If the aggrieved complained, it was with difficulty that they got a hearing and if their complaint was against a pandit, they might as well have complained against the Maharaja.

An Englishman named Lt. Col. Thorpe entered Kashmir as a tourist in 1833. While camping at Tosamaidan, he caught sight of a pretty girl named Jana, daughter of one Daim Rathore, resident of village Sogen, Khag in the Beru tehsil. They got married and left for England. Robert was one of their 3 children. When he was 25, Robert visited Kashmir in 1865, primarily to see his mother's native land. He was deeply upset to see the pitiable condition of his motherland. This youngman became immediately fired by enthusiasm to fight against the injustices perpetrated on the people. He embarked on a campaign to expose the Maharaja's misrule by sending dozens of articles to newspapers outside Kashmir. In his writings, he launched scathing attacks on the British Government as well as on the Maharaja. Ranbir Singh was acutely embarrassed by Robert's activities. He expelled him but Robert reentered Kashmir to continue his mission. Ranbir Singh finally got Robert strangled to death in 1868, at the foothills of Shankaracharya, not far from the present site of the U.N. Observers office in Srinagar. Robert Thorpe is buried in the Shaikh Bagh cemetery, Srinagar. Kashmiris shall always remember Robert's supreme sacrifice with deep gratitude as he is undoubtedly one of our outstanding martyrs.

Kashmir Misgovernment, a book composed of Robert Thorpe's articles on Kashmir was published in London in 1870. He has espoused the cause of Kashmiris with deep sincerity and great eloquence. "Towards the Kashmiris we have committed a wanton outrage, a gross injustice and an act of tyrannical oppression, which violates every humane and honourable sentiment, which is opposed to the whole spirit of modern civilisation and in direct opposition to every tenet of the religion we profess.... undeserved sufferings of a people whose characteristics, both intellectual and moral, give evidence of former greatness, trampled upon by a race in every way inferior to themselves and steadily deteriorating under the influence of an oppressive despotism which bars the way to all improvement, whether, social, intellectual or religious".

For hundreds of years there existed a system, in Kashmir, of forced portage called '*begaar*'. In the mountainous terrain of Kashmir there were no roads and therefore no vehicles. Human beings made cheaper beasts of burden than mules or donkeys. Organised gangs would go out into the countryside, brutally snatching able-bodied men from their land and families and forcing them to act as unpaid porters for the government. It was not uncommon for journeys to last for weeks and months and the wretched victims would return home half-starved or they died of cold or sickness on the way and never came back at all. The system of '*begaar*' was most obnoxious during the Dogra rule. Referring to forced labour from Bandipora to Gilgit, Thorpe bemoans:-

"Picture to yourself, Oh reader! those desolate scenes where the Kashmiri peasants had to lay down their lives! None save those who have seen such, can fully realise their horrors. No imagination is powerful enough to realise them! the waste, hopeless aspect of the unbounded stretch of snow; the intensely keen blast of wind which strikes you with the force of an eagle's wing as it sweeps down upon you through the ravines; above and around you are snowy peaks and summits and precipitous slopes of rock, upon whose edge sits the avalanche waiting for its prey. Through such scenes, heavily laden, the peasants take their way. Powerful and hardy are the sons of Kashmir; patiently they toil onwards through the drifting snow, in the name of Allah and his Prophet! Many encourage each other with the words of hope; it may be that they will yet reach the other side in safety. Alas, no! From 2 or 3 peasants the strength is already departing and the keen wind is paralysing the sinews. Slowly the conviction fastens upon them that they shall never quit those frightful solitudes, never again see their homes, far off in the sunny Valley of Kashmir".

No record exists of the innumerable Kashmiris who have died of starvation, exhaustion and cold in the course of '*begaar*'.

All classes of the Muslim community, except the tailors and barbers, were the Maharaja's tax payers. The poorest and the worst-

off of all the taxpayers were the people living along the shores of the Anchar Lake in Srinagar. They subsisted on the sale of what they procured from the lake consisting of coarse kind of grass for cattle and reeds which they weaved into matting. In spite of living in a state of extreme poverty in windowless, lightless and bare cottages, they were obliged to enrich the Maharaja through taxes.

The sale of young girls to established houses of ill-fame was both protected and encouraged by the government. Plainly, the Maharaja whom the British had knighted in 1862, was shamelessly living on the wages of prostitution. Sale of girls was actuated by extreme poverty which in turn was caused by exorbitant taxation and unaffordable prices of eatables. These unfortunate girls could not ever ward-off their degraded lives since they could not raise money to repay the purchaser. They were refused permission to marry lest the government would lose revenue accruing through high taxes on them.

The punishment for killing a cow during Gulab Singh's time was death but owing to remonstrances of the British Government, the penalty during Ranbir Singh's time was changed to life imprisonment. But this mitigated punishment was hardly more merciful than the capital penalty. The government vengeance would not only fall upon the actual cow-killer but on the whole of his family. After each day's investigation into the circumstances of the so-called crime, the entire family was cruelly flogged and when imprisoned, were branded and tortured with hot irons. Insufficient food and cruelty hastened their death and no one arrested in connexion with cow slaughter was ever released.

The concept of justice was most perverse. Offences against the government or against the Hindus were punished with undue severity, while as offences perpetrated by Hindus or government officials were either passed over or adjudicated with partiality and injustice. The police was oppressive too. Apart from the exorbitant taxes payable to the government, the policeman and the attendant Pandit clerk used to fleece the hapless people on frivolous excuses.

Apart from its scenic beauty, Kashmir symbolises prettily painted *papier mache* fine hand-knotted carpets, beautifully carved wood, chain-stitched rugs and above all the famous shawls. The shawl which is indigenous to Kashmir has enjoyed renown throughout the country's chequered history. Of course, new patterns, designs and colours were introduced in the shawl in the 14th and 15th centuries. During the Mughal times, shawl became a royal apparel and was gifted to nobles as a mark of favour. Kashmir shawl attained great popularity in France, Germany, U.K and Italy during the late 18th & 19th centuries. Napoleon's wife, Josephine discarded her cloak in favour of Kashmir Shawl and collected as many as 300 shawls.

The inimitable artisan who has given fame to Kashmir and fed the ego of aristocracy throughout the course of history, has all along lived an unenviable life. He has been exploited in the middle ages and inhumanely treated in the Mughal days. Bernier, in 1665 AD, records: "The artisan was lucky if he did not receive the lash in part payment of his labour". The Pathans are remembered for their savagery against the artisans. The Sikh rule reminds one of the history of Israelites under the Egyptian (Pharaoh's) rule when artisans were flogged at their daily labour and deprived of daily bread by the pitiless task masters.

The plight of the artisan reached its offensive heights during the Dogra rule. The shawl-maker earned scorn and disgrace while he conferred the privileged wearer with respectability. The shawl-maker, in spite of miserable wages and half-blindness resulting from conditions of work, could not relinquish his job as he was obliged to find a substitute which was impossible. Nothing but death could release him from bondage since the discharge of a shawl-maker would reduce the Maharaja's revenue by Rs. 36 a year!

"Those gaily-coloured threads of wool are not the only ones which these looms weave to their completion. Threads of life, more costly than those of the softest pashm, whose price will be demanded by Heaven yet, are spun out there on the loom of sickness and suffering. Death or flight are the only doors of release open to the

heavy laden *shawlbags* and this explains those extensive emigrations to Punjab. But the latter alternative is only possible to a man in tolerable health. Many of the fugitives make their way over remote and difficult mountain passes because the usual outlets of the Valley are guarded by the Dogra soldiers who refuse to permit them to emigrate"; (Kashmir Misgovernment). When a shawl-maker succeeded in emigrating to Punjab, his family members were fined and or imprisoned. The British Government of India had the power to remove, by a word, these miseries of artisans but regrettably never uttered a word.

Exasperated by the intolerable taxation and appalling working conditions, the weavers decided to apprise the Governor, Kripa Ram, about their difficulties. On 29th April 1865, the weavers, joined by a large number of fellow-Muslims marched to the Zaldager Maidan enroute to the governor's residence. Raj Kak Dhar, the notorious overlord of the shawl department thwarted the workers mission by misrepresenting to the governor that the weavers were on a murderous mission. The governor ordered the armed forces to disperse the workers. The troops opened fire resulting in casualties. A stampede followed causing collapse of the dilapidated Haji Rather bridge. Some workers were drowned in *Kutkul* and many others injured. 28 people died on that fateful day of 29th April. Three hundred workers including Quda Lala and Sona Shah were banished to Jammu and jailed there. Some of the weavers, including Rasul Sheikh and Ali Pala died in Ramnagar jail following torture. Raj Kak Dhar, in the wake of Zaldager massacre, engineered clashes between workers and their employers on the one hand and between Shias and Sunnis on the other. The motive behind these clashes was to prevent a lasting unity amongst the Muslims who could otherwise manfully resist the Dogra tyranny. The army was again called in to restore 'normalcy'. They resorted to plunder, loot and rape. Thus was suppressed the Zaldagar uprising.

A ghastly epidemic of cholera broke out in the Valley in 1867 AD, resulting in the death of thousands of people. The

Maharaja made money even out of this misery. It was announced in the city that the Maharaja had discovered an effective cure in the form of written charm which was to be pasted above the door of every house. Each copy cost 4 annas and was available at the post office. The printed charm was an invocation to Srikrishna which was sold not only as a cure against cholera but as a preventive measure also ! Ten years later Kashmir was visited by the great famine which took a toll of three-fifths of the population. Apart from early snowfall that year, heavy exactions from peasants and iniquitous land distribution also contributed to the famine. The Muslims who were dispossessed from their lands left the Valley and in their place Pandits were granted the lands. The government's response to the ravages of famine must put any human being, in any era, to shame. Through deceit and force, a large number of starving Muslims was put into boats and then the human cargo was emptied by drowning them in the Wular Lake. When news of these atrocities appeared in the British Indian press, a committee consisting of Mr. Hanoi, a British representative in Srinagar, and Diwan Badri Nath was constituted to make an enquiry. Nothing came out of the enquiry; its report, if any, is yet to be made public. The famine of 1877 AD was followed by a severe earthquake which again killed a large number of people.

Under the Sikh rule emigration from Kashmir was strictly discouraged but owing to British influence, the ban on exit was revoked by the Dogras in 1878. Consequent on the unbearable burden of taxation and the dread of '*begaar*', the earthquake-broken, famine-stricken and epidemic-ravaged people of Kashmir emigrated in large numbers. A sea of humanity drawn from towns and villages started their march to the land of hope - the British India. These people settled in Hazara, Rawalpindi, Dalhousie, Simla, Sialkot, Lahore, Amritsar, Ludhiana, Jehlum, Reasi, Poonch, Delhi, Patna, Madras, Bombay, Calcutta, Lucknow and Banglore. The migration was so excessive that according to the 1891 Punjab Census report 1,11,775 Muslims born in Kashmir were counted as having settled in the Punjab (Imperial Gazetteer of India 1909,J&K).

During Ranbir Singh's rule there occurred at least 3 devastating fires in Srinagar, reducing thousands of dwellings to ashes. The Maharaja turned even these grim situations to his advantage. He invited Hindu businessmen from the Punjab and got them settled in the fire-ravaged area of Srinagar. This area was named as Sri Ranbir Gang (Maharaj Gunj). Not content with the settlement of aliens on the Kashmir soil, Ranbir Singh closed down the 488-year old historic market in Nowhatta and Malarata areas, adjacent to Jamia Masjid. Subsequently, he encouraged Punjabis to settle on either side of Amira Kadal (bridge). He also rechristened a portion of Sarai Bala locality in Srinagar as Maharaj Bazar. The punjabi traders assumed total monopoly of wholesale trade in Kashmir.

Towards the end of his 28-year-old rule, Ranbir Singh's oppression touched new heights. On a visit to southern Kashmir, several complaints of torture and excessive realisation were brought to the Maharaja's notice. His contempt for justice impelled him to strip the complainants naked and throw them into the Verinag spring. Shameless methods of punishment were meted out to people by the Maharaja's governor, Wazir Punnu. The celebrated historian, Hassan, a contemporary of Ranbir Singh, illustrates with 3 instances the depths of degradation to which the administration had sunk. In the first instance, one Gh. Rasool Mir, a Headman was ordered by Thakur Koth, the tehsildar of Zainager in the Baramulla district, to be stripped naked; his private organ was tied to a rope and his daughter was forced to hold it and take him round the village. In the second instance, the Headman of Botaingo and his wife were stripped naked; a metallic rod was sent for from the shop of a blacksmith and the poor husband was forced to press the private parts of his naked wife with the rod. In the 3rd instance, the wife of one Sabir Butt from Lolab Valley was stripped naked and a burning stick of firewood was thrust into her private part. (Tarikh Hassan Page: 586).

Under the British pressure, the Maharaja appointed a State Council in 1882 with an advisory role in financial and

administrative matters. This Council could not help in mitigating the repression let loose on the people. On the other hand, the Pandit community entrenched itself in the administration and the revenue department was almost exclusively manned by them.

Ranbir Singh died in 1885. He was succeeded by his eldest son, Pratap Singh who ruled Kashmir for 40 years. Moved by the accounts of miseries of the people, the Viceroy sent a communication to the Maharaja in September 1885, emphasising the dire necessity of introducing reforms in the interest of good government. As a first step, Sir Olivier John was appointed as the British Resident in Kashmir. The Resident promoted British interests in Kashmir and kept an eye on the day to day administration of the State. For nearly 20 years, the Resident was the supreme authority in Kashmir. During this period people were freed from heavy taxes, extortion and forced labour. Olivier John was succeeded by Plowden, Parry Nisbet and Younghusband as Residents.

The British Government developed distrust in Pratap Singh as they feared that he was in treasonable correspondence with the Czarist regime of Russia whose territories bordered Kashmir. The British therefore decided to annex the State in order to prevent Russian incursions into Kashmir.

Pratap Singh, however, denied the existence of any correspondence with the Russians and accused his brother Amar Singh of forgery. The Indian press and Congress politicians raised a furore in defence of Pratap Singh. As a consequence, the British Government gave up the plan of annexation of Kashmir. P. N. Bazaz comments: "Irrational patriotism considered native rule, however corrupt, absolutist, despotic and cruel as preferable to the domination by the British. Besides, the Maharaja being a Hindu and the ruler of the holy land of Kashmir became an additional reason for the Indian leaders to see that he was not deposed." The British, nevertheless, clipped the Maharaja's wings by imposing a Regency council on him in 1889. The council was vested with all powers while Pratap Singh remained a figure-head only. However, in 1905 Pratap Singh's

full powers were restored and the council dissolved. A council of ministers was appointed instead with Amar Singh, the Maharaja's younger brother, as the Prime Minister.

The British Indian Government was alarmed about the Russian intentions with regard to Kashmir. The Russians invaded Chitral and Hunza and to counteract their move, the British acquired control of Gilgit. From here the British moved northwards and occupied, Hunza, Nagar, Chillas and Chitral, which had previously resisted Dogra attempts to subjugate them. Thus Kashmir became a pawn for sometime in the conflicting imperialistic interests of the British and the Russians.

Famine, yet again, struck Kashmir in 1890. Unlike previous occasions, the response of people this time was not passive. They resorted to demonstrations and looted food depots. Army highhandedness caused blood shed. A mass movement was led by a lawyer named Munshi Hasan Shah Zirak. During the course of a procession in the vicinity of Sherghari Palace, the processionists performed ablution for prayers on the banks of Jehlum. The Dogras misinterpreted ablution performance as an outrage of the modesty of Ranis who were living in the palace. Several processionists including Zirak were arrested, tried and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

The Dogras paid scant attention to the education of people. It appears to have been their fixed policy to keep the Muslims illiterate so that they were kept out of government service. The unlettered Muslims would also be obliged to take their enslavement with fatalism. It may be recalled here that Kashmir had been a great seat of learning until it lost its independence in 1586 AD. Ancient Kashmir was a place of Sanskrit learning and 'from this small valley have issued master pieces of history, poetry, romance, fable and philosophy'. (George Gierson - Linguistic survey of India). During the reign of the Sultans and the Chaks, learning received great encouragement.

Traditional schools and residential colleges came up. A

university was set up by Zain-ul-Abidin at Nowshera. Sultan Qutbuddin (1373-89 AD) set up a prestigious college at Qutubdinpora, Srinagar with a celebrated scholar Pir Haji Mohammad Qari as its first head. The famous academic Mulla Mohammad Jawhar Nanth presided over this institution during the reign of Jehangir. The Chak dynasty, in spite of their short rule, promoted literary and artistic pursuits. The Mughals encouraged vocational training in carpet, shawl-making and other handicrafts. At the end of the 17th century Kashmir stood as a pioneer of progress and a beacon of enlightenment to the surrounding territories. From this exalted position, Kashmir declined under the infamous Afghan, Sikh and Dogra rulers, until, by the 19th century, the cultural glories of its past had disappeared. It has since been known for desolation of its land and the misery of its people.

In 1874, Ranbir Singh established the first middle school in Srinagar called the State School at Bagh-i-Dilawar Khan. In 1891-92, the total number of boys under education in the Kashmir Valley was 1585 out of whom Muslims numbered 233. It may be relevant to add that the Valley's Muslim population in 1891 was 8 lacs. The deliberate neglect of Muslims particularly in the field of education prompted the Government of India in 1916 to investigate the state of affairs in Kashmir. Elaborate recommendations were made to the Maharaja regarding opening of schools and encouragement of students with scholarships but the state paid little heed to the suggestions.

Reverend Knowles, a British missionary started a school for boys in Srinagar in 1880 AD. The medium of instruction, for the first time, was English. Knowles was followed by Tyndale Biscoe in 1890 AD whose services to education in Kashmir are acknowledged with deep gratitude. It would not be unfair to acclaim Tyndale Biscoe as the father and founder of modern education in Kashmir. It was somewhere in the nineties of the last century that one of the Mission ladies started a girls school in Srinagar which is now known as Mallinson School. The Muslims of Kashmir emulated the British missionaries and founded the Islamia School at the beginning of this

century.

The British missionaries similarly started medical services in Kashmir in the spring of 1864. Dr. Elmslie, the first British doctor in Kashmir faced great hardships for he had no hospital; his operations being performed under the trees. The Government discouraged people from visiting the doctor and infact police were stationed around to keep the patients away. Several patients suffered imprisonment for disobeying the government orders.

Distressed at the condition of people Dr. Elmslie lamented: "Poor perishing Kashmir, for whom I could weep all day". Dr. Elmslie was succeeded by doctors Maxwell, Downes, Arthur Neve, Ernest Neve, Vosper, Roche and others who have all earned the gratitude of innumerable sick and suffering Kashmiris who benefited from their loving care.

One of the most important events of Pratap Singh's reign was the land settlement of the Valley. It was commenced by a British civil servant, Wingate in 1887 but owing to great hurdles put by the State officials and the feudal lords, he gave up his job in disgust in 1888. The job was taken over by Walter Lawrence in 1889 and he completed the operations in 1893. The main features of the settlement included abolition of the use of force in collection of revenue, abolition of '*begaar*' (forced labour); occupancy rights were conferred on peasants in undisputed lands. While taking up the job Lawrence comments: "At this time the condition of the Valley was utterly deplorable. The Brahmans had the power and authority and the Muslim cultivators were forced to work to keep the idle Brahman in comfort. In 1889, the State was bankrupt. The rich land was left uncultivated, and the army was employed in forcing the villagers to plough and sow and worse still the soldiers came at harvest time; and when the share of the State had been seized and these men of war had helped themselves, there was very little grain left for the unfortunate peasants...."

Pratap Singh's reign witnessed the opening of the Jehlum Valley Road in 1890 connecting Kashmir with RawalPindi and of the

Banihal Road in 1915 linking Srinagar with Jammu.

Pratap Singh was intensely religious. It is commonly said that he would not see a non-Hindu in the morning before his prayer. He would look at a cow rather than any non-Hindu before his morning prayer. He would even break his '*huqqa*' if the fringe of his carpet was touched by a Muslim and would bathe as a penance for such unholy touch! He was a patron of Brahmans and Sadhus. Brahmans were exempted from capital punishment.

Persian, the court language of Kashmir for almost 500 years was replaced by Urdu in 1907. This was greatly resented by the people both in Jammu and the Valley because of their poor proficiency in Urdu. A large influx of Punjabis into Kashmir in pursuit of jobs took place consequent upon the introduction of Urdu as the State's official language. This caused great bitterness among the potential job seekers, particularly the Pandits. A peaceful agitation ensued and the Government was forced to protect the legitimate interests of its subjects. The State Subject legislation came into force in 1927. It had two main advantages for the permanent residents of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Firstly, in all future appointments, the entry of non-State nationals became difficult; secondly, most of the lands in the Valley would have been otherwise sold away by the poor Muslim peasantry to the money lenders and other non-State nationals.

CHAPTER 9

THE AWAKENING

In 1877, a memorandum, containing grave allegations of misgovernment and maladministration against the Dogra rulers, was secretly submitted to the Viceroy. The precise contents and the authorship of the memorandum are, unfortunately, not known for certain. It is also not known as to what action, if any, the Viceroy took in this regard.

In 1924, the labourers of the Government Silk Factory became restive owing to rampant corruption and a miserable daily wage of four-and-a-half annas per head. Even a part of this starvation wage was pocketed by the Pandit officials. On persistent demand from labourers, an inquiry was instituted, which found the allegations of corruption to be valid. The authorities, however, allowed the wrong-doers to go scot-free. This resulted in a lightening strike by thousands of workers. The despotic government arrested the labour leaders, including a dashing youngman who was popularly known as 'King'. To protest against the arrest of their leaders and to demonstrate their solidarity, the entire labour force marched in a procession in the city and finally halted at Hazuri Bagh. The procession was joined by women, children and other sympathisers. The peaceful processionists raised slogans demanding punishment of the corrupt officials, release of the arrested leaders and a raise in their wages. The Maharaja's nephew, Hari Singh who was the Commander-in-Chief used brute force to disperse the procession. Scores of women and children were trampled upon and hundreds of workers sustained injuries. The workers were arrested and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. The entire city of Srinagar was steeped in great sorrow. 'King' was tried for rioting and treason. He was imprisoned and tortured. He died a premature death.

The ban imposed by the government on

Moharrum procession in 1924 was greatly resented by all sections of Muslims. Saad-ud-Din Shawl, a prominent businessman of Kashmir and Agha Haider, a Lucknow advocate, jointly submitted a petition of protest to the government.

Instigated by a newspaper article published from Lahore, a group of pandits attempted to forcibly occupy the Khanqah-i-Mualla, a sacred Muslim shrine in Srinagar. Some damage was caused to the architecturally unique monument but its occupation was thwarted by the Muslims. Similar incidents of attempted forcible occupation of Muslim shrines occurred in Anantnag and Baramulla.

Spread of education made the Muslims deeply conscious of the wretched situation prevailing in Kashmir. Discontent became widespread. The people were convinced that the Dogra rulers would not accede to their rights. Therefore, in a few secret meetings, held in Srinagar at the behest of Saad-ud-Din Shawl, it was decided to present a memorandum to Lord Reading, the Viceroy, who was in the city in October 1924. The memorandum was presented to the Viceroy while he visited a shop to see the local handicrafts. The demands included the following: Proprietary rights in land be granted to the tenants; adequate representation to Muslims in services; eradication of corruption; fair trial of the arrested workers of the Silk Factory; introduction of free and compulsory primary education; abolition of free, forced labour; restoration to Muslims of their illegally seized shrines, mosques, lands and an elected legislative assembly. Attached with the memorandum was a statement exposing the gross inadequacy of Muslim representation in the services. According to the statement, the number of non-Muslim gazetted officers in the Valley was 421, drawing a yearly salary of more than Rs. 16 lacs, while the number of Muslim officers was 55 whose yearly pay amounted to a little more than Rs. one lac.

The memorandum was signed by Saad-ud-Din Shawl, Hassan Shah Naqshbandi, Molvi Ahmadullah, Mirwaiz Hamdani, Syed Hussain Shah Jalali, Mufti Sharif-ud-Din and Hassan Shah

Mahandi.

The Viceroy forwarded the memorandum to the Maharaja for necessary action. The Maharaja appointed a 3 member committee consisting of Janak Singh, a close relation of the Dogra rulers, Chaudhri Khushi Mohammad, a Punjabi Muslim and the state revenue minister and Mr. Glancy, the finance and police minister, to look into the grievances. The committee, without seriously going into the merits of the memorandum, dismissed the grievances as untrue! As a retribution, Saad-ud-Din Shawl was exiled to British India; Hassan Shah Naqasbandi's lands were taken over by the government and his son, Noor Shah, a tahsildar was dismissed from services. With the exile of Shawl, the unrest in Kashmir gained momentum. Maharaja Pratap Singh died in December 1925 and was succeeded by his nephew and heir-apparent Hari Singh. In spite of Hari Singh's liberal education and western style of living, his coronation shocked the people because money was recklessly squandered from the public exchequer on the various ceremonies. His favourite horse '*Zabar-dast*' was decked with emeralds worth Rs. 7 lacs. That huge amount should have been spent on celebrating his accession to the throne in a land where the great majority of people could not afford even one meal a day, was a poor demonstration of his being well-intentioned.

Surrounded by his favourites and living in an ivory tower, Hari Singh had no personal contact with his subjects who through centuries of suppression and misrule were burdened with misery and deprivation. He lived an ease-loving and pleasure-seeking life. The Maharaja set up a military school in Jammu where admission was restricted to Hindu Rajputs only. Semi-literate Dogras were appointed as heads of department in the civil services. There was no freedom of press, speech and association.

Sir Albion Bannerji, a Bengali Christian civil servant of the Government of India, who held the post of foreign and political minister of the Maharaja, unsuccessfully persuaded Hari Singh to radically change his oppressive policies. In disgust Bannerji

resigned his post on 15th March, 1929. He unveiled Kashmir's misfortune thus :- "Jammu and Kashmir State is labouring under many disadvantages, with a large Muslim population absolutely illiterate, groaning under poverty and very low economic conditions of living in the villages and practically governed like dumb driven cattle. There is no touch between the government and the people, no suitable opportunity for representing grievances. The administration has no sympathy with the peoples wants and grievances. The appalling economic condition of the people is responsible for all the evils prevailing in the State. I have found the people very responsible and prudent, though they are very backward."

Bannerji's exposé greatly embarrassed the Maharaja and his sycophants. The Maharaja utilised the services of education minister, Agha Syed Hussain to vilify Bannerji. Syed Hussain praised the 'kind and caring' Maharaja. This is how opportunism and lack of integrity were publicly displayed. The traitor's blatant falsehood was challenged in a public meeting held at Khanqah-i-Mualla. The speakers in this meeting, the first ever held in public, included among others, Yaqub Ali, Molvi Abdul Ahad and Ghulam Ahmed Kashfi. The animated controversy in the Indian press regarding the Dogra misrule in Kashmir prompted a Kashmiri student in Aligarh named Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to unmask in a newspaper article, the ugly face of repression in his country.

While the people of Kashmir were seething with discontent on account of the injustices of despotic rule, Hari Singh got involved in a sex scandal in Europe. In 1921, a group of conspirators in England, including Hari Singh's English A.D.C had introduced the prince to a pretty young woman called Mrs. Robinson. The prince, instantly disarmed by her, invited her to go to Paris with him. There, in the St. James and Albamy Hotel, Mrs. Robinson had deliberately left the door of their bedroom unlocked and the conspirators had burst in upon the couple demanding one-and-a-half lac pound sterling as the price of their silence. The court case in which this story was told took place many years later. Throughout the case

the prince was referred to as 'Mr. A'. Gossip and rumour finally yielded to truth and Hari Singh was exposed. The scandal left him untouched in Kashmir as the people were gravely preoccupied with far serious matters than his amorous adventures abroad.

The Bannerji episode had a stirring influence on the Muslims of the State in general and its educated youth in particular. In order to devise a programme and a strategy against the Dogra repression, Ghulam Nabi Gilkar, a youngman of great sincerity and dedication, founded the 'All Kashmir Social Upliftment Association' in March 1930. A number of youngmen joined the Association and vowed to fight against injustice. Gilkar kindled the long suppressed aspirations of the Kashmiris.

Soon afterwards a Reading Room Party came into existence in the house of Mufti Jalal-ud-Din, at Fateh Kadel, Srinagar. Ostensibly the party was set up to peruse newspapers and discuss books on general information and religious matters but in essence the objective was a political rendezvous. It may be stressed here that political associations and parties were unlawful in the state. Gilkar's Association merged with the Reading Room party. Its prominent members included Molvi Abdullah, Molvi Abdul Rahim, Mirwaiz Hamdani, Hakim Ali, Pirzada Ghulam Rasool, Mufti Jalal-ud-Din, Pirzada Ahmed Shah Fazili, Mohammed Rajab and Khawja Ghulam Ahmed Ashai. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, the first Kashmiri Muslim with a Master's degree in chemistry also joined the party. He was then popularly known as Master Abdullah. Encouraged by the response of educated Muslims and the interest shown by the uneducated, the Reading Room was given a regular organisational shape. Mohammad Rajab was elected its first president and Master Abdullah became the secretary. The Reading Room established contacts with the press in Lahore and in London. Articles based on facts and figures began to appear in the newspapers, bringing home to the Indian and British public opinion the pathetic condition of the people in Kashmir.

Meanwhile the Maharaja framed civil service

recruitment rules, which were blatantly unfair. Amongst other hurdles, it was obligatory for an applicant to possess a 'good family background' and the government reserved the right to reject an applicant without assigning any reason. These devices were framed with a view to frustrating the educated Muslim youth from entering the services. In the Reading Room deliberations, Sheikh Abdullah explained the implications of recruitment rules and also dwelt at length on the political and economic subjugation of Muslims. Consequently, a memorandum from the Reading Room was sent to the government, protesting against its iniquitous policies. A meeting between representatives of the State Cabinet and of the Reading Room followed. The government was presented with a detailed exposition of the Muslim point of view. The government ignored the just case presented by the Reading Room. The Muslims realised that it was time to organise a political movement to win their rights. Conscious as they were of the uphill task ahead, they continued the political march undaunted. Another organisation styled as 'Muslim Youngmen's Association' appeared on the scene with the avowed objective of fighting for the rights of people. Khawja Ghulam Ahmed Ashai became the president and Sheikh Abdullah its secretary.

Prior to the establishment of the Reading Room in Srinagar, the Muslims of Jammu had organised themselves under a body called 'Youngmen's Muslim Association of Jammu.' The Youngmen's Associations of Srinagar and Jammu shared identity of views, aims and objectives. They collaborated with each other. An influential section of the press outside the state sympathised with the political aspirations of the people of the Jammu and Kashmir state. The Maharaja's misrule was relentlessly exposed by the newspapers. The government banned the entry into the state of newspapers like *Siyasat*, *Inquilab*, *Zamindar* and *Muslim Outlook* owing to their pro-people news and views. The sympathisers of the Kashmir movement in the Punjab, however, managed to send printed material to Kashmir in the form of posters and pamphlets, surreptitiously.

Hari Singh returned from Europe in early 1931,

alongwith his baby son, Prince Karan Singh who was born in France. The landowners and men of influence, guided by Balkak Dhar - a descendant of the infamous Birbal and Raj Kak Dhar, formed a reception committee to felicitate the Maharaja on the birth of heir-apparent. The Reading Room party, by now prominent and influential amongst the Muslims, decided to form an exclusively Muslim reception committee as it would afford them an opportunity of presenting their grievances in the welcome address. This decision was taken at Pir Maqbool Gilani's house in Khanyar where the meeting was attended by about 200 prominent Muslims. Sheikh Abdullah made a forceful speech in this gathering and exhorted his colleagues to inculcate self-confidence. He also promised that he would not shirk imprisonment for the sake of people. This was Sheikh Abdullah's first public address in his phenomenal and yet controversial career in politics.

Hari Singh declined invitations both of the loyalists as well as of the Reading Room. Sheikh Abdullah addressed a few public meetings and became a hero. A significant contributory factor to his great popularity was the melodious recitation of the Holy Quran with which he invariably started his speeches. In a mass meeting held at Jamia Masjid, Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah, the religious head of Muslims, hailed Sheikh Abdullah as 'our leader' and implored people to follow him. This is an important milestone in Sheikh Abdullah's meteoric rise in Kashmir politics.

Apart from political subjugation and economic deprivation, the Muslims of the state experienced religious persecution also. Delivering the sermon after the Eid prayers on 29th April 1931, the Imam of Jammu city referred to the tyranny of Pharaohs against Moses. The Dogra policeman on duty, on hearing the word tyranny ordered the Imam to stop his sermon as in his view the Imam had transgressed the bounds of law and was therefore guilty of treason! The bigoted Dogra policeman obviously did not appreciate that the tyranny-related incident referred to in the sermon belonged to an epoch many millennia ago in the far off Egypt!.

Another unpleasant incident occurred in the Jammu Jail on 4th June 1931 in which it was alleged that a non-Muslim policeman had deliberately kicked a copy of the Holy Quran. Similarly, a few leaves of the Book were found in a public latrine in Srinagar on 20th June 1931. Hundreds of posters published by the Youngmen's Muslim Association of Jammu, in regard to sacrilege of the Holy Quran, arrived in Srinagar. Muslim passions were greatly inflamed. A protest meeting was organised in Jamia Masjid, Srinagar. Sheikh Abdullah, who had by now become associated with many a fables made an impassioned speech and asked the government to punish the guilty in connexion with the Jammu sacrilege. The government utilised the services of 'notables' like Mirza Mustafa, Rahim Bandey, Molvi Sharif-ud-Din to sow discord among Muslims, but in vain.

The growing popularity of Sheikh Abdullah and his defiant attitude alarmed the ruling circles. Sheikh Abdullah, who was a Science teacher in the State High School on a monthly salary of Rs. 31 was transferred to Muzaffarabad. He refused to comply with the transfer order and was therefore dismissed from service. This proved to be the proverbial last straw for him. Having put in only about 4 months in service, disproportionate to his qualifications, he called it a day and plunged into politics as a full timer. The news of his dismissal was announced in a huge public meeting where Sheikh Abdullah roared against the injustices of the autocratic rule. Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, on hearing the thunderous speech of Sheikh Abdullah exclaimed in great joy: '*Sher-i-Kashmir*,' (The Lion of Kashmir). The label stuck to Sheikh all his life and people got the slogan they needed. This occasion transformed Master Abdullah into Sher-i-Kashmir.

The government initiated moves to invite Muslim representatives, 4 from Jammu and 7 from the Valley, to a meeting with Hari Singh so that their grievances could be looked into. The Jammu representatives were Choudhary Abbas, Yaqub Ali, Gauhar Rehman and Sheikh Abdul Hamid. The seven representatives from the Valley were elected in a massive public meeting held at

Khanqah-i-Mualla. The meeting was an impressive display of Muslim solidarity as people of all sects and shades of opinion participated in it. It was in this meeting that Sheikh Abdullah took a public oath, with Quran in his hands, pledging never to betray the cause of the Muslims of Kashmir. The atmosphere was surcharged with emotions. Thousands of eyes were full of tears and shrieks of 'Long Live' were heard miles away. The audience of 50,000 people authorised Sheikh Abdullah to nominate the 7 representatives and he suggested the following names:- Khawja Saad-ud-Din Shawl, Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah, Mirwaiz Hamdani, Agha Hussain Jalali, Khawja G. A. Ashai, Munshi Shahab-ud-Din and Sheikh Abdullah. The proposal received universal acclamation. The meeting was then dispersed and all the leaders left the venue.

A young man in the audience went up to the rostrum and started an oration in chaste Urdu. "Muslim brethren! The time has now come when we should meet force by greater force to put an end to the tyrannies and brutalities to which you are subjected. You must rely on your own strength and wage a relentless war against oppression". Pointing his finger towards the palace he thundered: "Raze it to the ground". This man was Abdul Qadeer, an Indian employee of a British army officer who was then holidaying in Kashmir. Qadeer was arrested on 25th June '31 and charged with treason.

The people evinced keen interest in the trial proceedings at the court but the government decided to hold the trial in camera within the closed doors of the Central Jail, Srinagar. This caused wide spread resentment among the people. Addressing a memorable public meeting at Gaw Kadal on 12th July 1931, Ghulam Nabi Gilkar and Sheikh Abdullah exhorted people to get ready for a resolute struggle against the despotic rule. The people responded by chanting the following verse:

*We now long for martyrdom,
Let the executioner prove his prowess.*

Fatalism yielded place to resolution.

Thousands of Muslims assembled outside the central jail on 13th July and demanded permission to enter the premises in order to witness the Qadeer trial. In return, the Dogra police arrested some people and resorted to unprovoked firing - 180 rounds in all. Seventeen people died on the spot and five others succumbed to their injuries a few hours later; scores of others were wounded. The dead and injured were carried in a procession to Jamia Masjid. The entire city was plunged into gloom. The sense of shock was overwhelming and the reverence for the martyrs deep. Martial law was clamped in Srinagar. The Jamia Masjid was surrounded by soldiers equipped with machine guns. It was here that one of the martyrs, who had not breathed his last yet, told Sheikh Abdullah, "I have done my duty and now you proceed ahead." Interestingly, Sheikh Abdullah has dedicated his autobiography to this martyr and his immortal legacy.

To preserve the sanctity of the day and enshrine memory of the martyrs for posterity it was decided to bury them in a single graveyard. On the 3rd day, they were buried amidst scenes of national mourning. The place has since come to be known as Martyrs Graveyard where every year on 13th July, people rededicate themselves to the cause of freedom. 13th July 1931 is a landmark in the annals of modern Kashmir.

The government resorted to a brutally repressive policy. Hundreds of political activists, including Sheikh Abdullah, Ghulam Nabi Gilkar, Abdul Rahim, Choudhary Abbas and Yaqub Ali were arrested and put in the Hari Parbat fort. The army rule unleashed vilest of cruelties on the people; Muslims were forced to kiss the Dogra flag and lick shoes of the soldiers. Shops and houses were looted by the soldiers and many women raped. Merciless beatings of people were the order of the day. Kashmir remained cut

off from Rawalpindi and Jammu for a fortnight owing to suspension of traffic. The popular resentment against the massacre of 13th July spread to towns and villages and dozens of processions followed. There was widespread rioting in the Jammu province as a sequel to the Srinagar carnage. Five people died at Nawa Bazar, Srinagar following police firing. For the first time in the history of Kashmir, people struck work for political ends. Life came to a standstill for more than 2 weeks.

Many legends came to be woven round the personality of Sher-i-Kashmir after his imprisonment at the Hari Parbat fort. People widely believed the fable that he was thrown into a cauldron of burning oil but came out unhurt. Another myth which gained wide currency was that his name was inscribed on the leaves of trees. Within no time popular folklore and ballad became Sheikh Abdullah's exclusive preserve.

The Maharaja dismissed his prime minister, Wakefield on charges of complicity with the popular agitation and inducted Hari Krishan Koul in his place. Koul employed the 'carrot and stick' policy. On the one hand, he offered to release the political prisoners and on the other, let loose repression against people and characterised their leaders as "bad characters and goondas."

Addressing his first post-release public meeting on 2nd August 1931, Sheikh Abdullah said: "We are loyal to the Maharaja but we shall never falter in voicing our demands even if it leads us to the gallows". Observance of Kashmir Day on 14th August was marked by a complete hartal, processions and public meetings. A huge meeting of about 30,000 women was held at the Martyrs graveyard. The Maharaja's government in a press note claimed that the Kashmir Day had evoked no response in Srinagar! Blatant lies and falsehood emanating from the government agencies took their birth here and shall keep our company till the end of the narrative in this work.

The Maharaja sought intervention of two leading Indian Congress-men, Maulana Azad and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, to deal with the popular agitation in the State. Because of their efforts,

a meeting between the Muslim representatives and the Maharaja took place on 15th August 1931. Consequent upon this meeting an agreement was arrived at between the two sides. The political leaders suspended the agitation and in return the government promised to release all political prisoners, withdraw emergency regulations and reinstate the dismissed and suspended employees charged with complicity in the agitation. In a few days, tensions returned to the scene because the government failed to reinstate some of its employees in breach of its promise. Sheikh Abdullah resumed criticism of the government. Prime Minister Koul summoned Sheikh Abdullah and Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah to his residence on 21st September 1931. Koul tried to intimidate the Sheikh by abusing him, "You are a big *Badmash!* You are a mean fellow. We will teach your people a lesson." Sheikh Abdullah retorted, "Kashmir Durbar has been subjecting us to oppression and injustice for too long.... serious consequences will follow if it again seeks to shed the blood of Muslims."

Sheikh Abdullah was arrested in the prime minister's house where he had been invited for a meeting! A reign of terror was again let loose. Hartals, processions and protests became an every day affair. The mounted cavalry equipped with spears charged their beasts on thousands of protesters all over the city and opened fire at a number of places killing 3 men at Jamia Masjid, 2 at Maisuma and 8 at Gaw Kadal. The government virtually unleashed an undeclared war against an unarmed people. The people responded by constituting a War Council! Mufti Jalal -ud-Din was the first chief of the Council and was succeeded after his arrest by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad whose arrest was also followed by a succession of scores of other volunteers. Molvi Masoodi, a resident of Karnah, then Arabic teacher in a government school in Srinagar, announced his resignation from service and offered himself for arrest. Khawja G.A. Ashai was arrested on 23rd September 1931.

Women also made a notable contribution to the movement. Besides courting arrest, a large number of women

received bullet injuries and at least 4 deaths have been recorded owing to police firing in September 31. They are Sajida Bano of Shopian, Jana Begum of Nowshera, Frachi of Baramulla and Fazli of Maisuma.

In response to repression perpetrated by the authorities, Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah, proclaimed *jehad* against the government. Consequently, all able-bodied men, from Srinagar and the adjoining suburbs, numbering about 60,000 gathered at Khanyar on 24th September 1931. They were armed with sticks, axes, spears, lances and some country made rifles. Seeing the excited mood of the crowd, the government emissaries invited a delegation, consisting of Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah, Saad-ud-Din Shawl and Molvi Abdullah, to meet the Maharaja. Hari Singh with a loaded pistol in hand uttered pompously in chaste Kashmiri: "Have you started a revolt? If I wish I can skin you alive right now... I will not allow anyone to instigate my subjects to rebellion. Go and tell those people who are assembled at Khanyar to return to their homes". The Mirwaiz wanted to interrupt and say something but Sutherland, the Maharaja's British army commander requested the Maharaja to grant him permission to annihilate not only the deputationists but also their supporters. The members of the deputation were browbeaten. When they returned to Khanyar, the leaders withheld all the melodrama that had occurred at the palace. They told the anxious gathering that Hari Singh had agreed to receive a memorandum of their grievances and promised to redress them.

A military display was held in the city on 25th September. Soldiers with rifles, bayonets and machine guns staged a march-past. Every Muslim passer-by was compelled to salute the soldiers and raise the slogan of "Long Live the Maharaja". Those declining were arrested and summarily sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Four whipping centres were opened in Srinagar at the central jail, police stations of Kothi Bagh and Maharaj Gung and the exhibition ground Batmaloo. The victims were stripped naked and administered 30 stripes each. This resulted in bleeding at the site of lashes and deaths too have been recorded following whippings. P.N.

Bazaz records in 'Inside Kashmir': "The soldiers gave full play to their racial animosity and religious perversity when dealing with the Muslims".

The excesses committed by the Dogra forces spread to other parts of the state. In Anantnag 25 people were killed in police firing and hundreds injured. In Shopian 5 people died in police firing. Jammu and Muzaffarabad also witnessed protest marches condemning the police brutalities in the Valley.

The Mirwaiz unilaterally assured the government that Sheikh Abdullah would not make any speeches, if released, until the presentation of the memorandum to the Maharaja. All the political prisoners, including Sheikh Abdullah were released on 3rd October 1931.

The eleven Muslim representatives of Jammu and Kashmir had a meeting with the Maharaja on 19th October 1931 and presented him a memorandum. They told Hari Singh that, "a long series of unbearable hardships and disabilities had been imposed on the people and unless reforms and improvements are effected, the lives of Muslim subjects will continue to be miserable." They further complained that people had lost all confidence in the officials of the State as they were totally unsympathetic towards the peoples grievances. They demanded action against the officials, the police and the military for the repressive role they had played in the various disturbances. A constitution, guaranteeing freedom of press, speech and association and equality before law, was also demanded. The other demands included:- A representative form of government, a legislative assembly, local self-government, reforms in revenue system, adequate representation to Muslims in services, army and judiciary, restoration of proprietary rights of peasants over their lands, eradication of corruption, legitimate rights for labourers, improving the educational opportunities for Muslims and restoration of places of worship taken over by the government.

The Maharaja in a brief conciliatory reply, promised to look into the grievances and as a gesture of his sincerity Pathar

Masjid, which had been taken over by the Sikh rulers 113 years ago, was restored to Muslims. In recognition of his services to the movement, Saad-ud-Din Shawl presided over the reopening function of the Masjid on 29th Nov. 1931. The city was profusely illuminated as a mark of jubilation.

The law and order situation in Mirpur, Poonch and Rajouri deteriorated owing to arbitrary enhancement of land revenue. In Darhal 25 people were shot dead; in Kotli 6 people were killed in police firing and another 22 Muslims were burnt alive. While the situation in Jammu province was alarming, the government banished from the state Mufti Zia-ud-Din, a political activist of Poonch. The Muslims interpreted this action as proof of bad faith on the part of government. Sheikh Abdullah addressed a public meeting in defiance of a government order prohibiting him from making public speeches. He was arrested on 23rd January 1932, tried summarily and sentenced to 6 months imprisonment. Hartals, processions, lathi charges and police firing followed. Three people were killed in Baramulla, 6 in Sopore, 9 at Uri and 22 at Handwara.

Realising that his government was not equal to the challenge posed by people, the 'brave' Maharaja invoked the infamous Treaty of Amritsar and appealed to the Governor-General in Delhi for help and protection. The British Indian troops were, consequently despatched to the State from Jullundar Cantonment.

As a corollary of the Muslim memorandum presented to the Maharaja on 19th October, the government set up the Glancy Commission on 12th Nov. 1931, to look into the grievances of various sections of people. Mr. Glancy, a British civil servant, headed the Commission which included Khawja G.A. Ashai, Choudhary Ghulam Abbas, Pandit P.N. Bazaz and Lok Nath Sharma as members.

The facts and figures presented to the Glancy commission revealed the injustices committed against the Muslims. In 1932 there were 59 middle schools in the State -- 32 in Jammu province and 27 in the Valley. In the same year the number of Muslim students

in the government high schools was 3,663 as compared to 5,683 non-Muslim students. Restrictions had been imposed on the admission of Muslims to science classes in the S.P. College, Srinagar, the only college in the Valley. The admissions were manipulated in a way that of the 145 science seats, the Muslims did not get more than 18. In the education department, the Muslim employees numbered 727 out of a total of 2,347. Muslims held 135 gazetted posts in the State out of a total of 763. In the department of revenue, the Muslim employees share of pay was only 18%; in the department of finance less than 6% and in the department of health 11%. The excuse advanced by the government and its apologists for the miserable representation of Muslims in the services was the non-availability of educated or qualified Muslims. The Glancy Commission was confronted with evidence of 12 graduates and 133 matriculates among the unemployed Muslim youth. What about recruitment to class IV jobs for which no educational qualifications were prescribed then? The Muslim representation in that class too was poor - less than 25% .

The Glancy Commission presented its report in March 1932 to Prime Minister Colvin, who had since succeeded H.K. Koul. The recommendations of the Commission included:-

- 1) Restoration to Muslims of Shrines at Khanqah Sokhta, Khanqah Bulbul Shah, Khanqah Dara Shikoh, Malshahi Bagh mosque (Ganderbal), Khanqah Sufi Shah(Jammu). Bahu Mosque (Bahu) and Srinagar Idgah.
- 2) Proprietary rights of lands be granted to occupancy tenants.
- 3) Fair share in government appointments to all communities.
- 4) Unauthorised exactions be stopped.
- 5) Abolition of marriage tax.

The Muslims were unhappy with the recommendations because the commission had not accepted many of their just demands, such as representation in services in accordance with their ratio in population, grant of licences to keep arms, recruitment to

the army. They, however, welcomed the recommendations as they thought it was a step forward. The pandits, however, were up in arms. They presented their demands and grievances in a voluminous document. It was claimed that the Khanqah-i-Mualla was originally a *Kali Mandir* and that it should be made over to them. As the so-called grievances were only a smokescreen for their privileged position, the commission was not duped. The pandits pressurised P.N. Bazaz to dissociate himself from the commission. His refusal to oblige the pandits is a testimony to his strength of character and intellectual honesty. He paid a heavy price for fair play. He has ever since been a persona non grata with the pandit community. Instead of conceding that their privileged position was essentially untouched, the pandits resorted to public and private meetings to condemn the Commission. J.L. Killam and Kashap Bandu incited them to violence. The two pandit leaders were jailed and their violent followers flogged. During the course of a procession taken out by Muslim school children on 22nd September 1932, some non-Muslim on-lookers pelted them with stones without any provocation. This incident, coupled with Killam's provocative speeches prior to his arrest, resulted in group clashes in which both Pandits and Muslims were injured. At this stage it was Sheikh Abdullah who convened a meeting at Gol Bagh and restored communal harmony. Jia Lal Killam, realising his folly appeared in Gol Bagh and tendered an unqualified apology. Sheikh Abdullah urged the people to let bygones be bygones.

CHAPTER 10**THE MUSLIM CONFERENCE**

It has already been narrated in the previous chapters that tens of thousands of Muslims emigrated from the State on account of the oppression unleashed by the rulers in Kashmir since 1819. Frequent and devastating famines were also contributory factors in mass migrations. Most of the emigrants settled in the Punjab. In a generation or two, these displaced Kashmiris became an educated and economically prosperous community. In spite of their new homes, they retained a sentimental attachment to Kashmir.

While the Valley was in deep slumber, Kashmiri Muslims organised their first formal association in 1896, at Lahore. Its inaugural meeting was attended, among others, by the great son of Kashmir, Allama Iqbal. Through the efforts of Kashmiris settled in Lahore, contacts were established with all the leading Kashmiris in the subcontinent leading to the establishment of All India Muslim Kashmiri Conference in 1920. The Conference started publication of newspapers, viz - Kashmir Gazette, Kashmiri Magazine and Kashmiri, containing articles concerning the inequalities and discriminations, suffered by the Kashmiri Muslims under the Dogra rule. The leading lights of the Kashmiri Conference included Allama Iqbal, Sir Salimullah, Nawab of Dacca (a Kashmiri emigrant), Syed Mohsin Shah, an advocate, Din Mohammad, a jurist and Munshi Mohammad Din Fauq who had dedicated his life to the cause of the uplift of his Kashmiri brethren. The Conference rendered financial assistance to private schools run in the Valley and also awarded scholarships to poor students.

Iqbal was emotionally involved in the movement for the advancement of Kashmiris. In his poetry, he has given vent to his feelings regarding the indescribable poverty and sufferings of his Kashmiri brethren. He visited Kashmir, perhaps for the first time, in

1921 and remarked: "If Kashmiris awaken from their slumber, they are destined to lead the subcontinent".

The cause of Kashmir was also taken up by leading Indian newspapers, viz., *Inquilab*, *Siyasat*, *Sun Rise*, *The Light* and *Zamindar*. The Srinagar massacre of the 13th July 1931 drew considerable protest from the Kashmiris of the subcontinent. At least seven thousand telegrams were sent to the Maharaja protesting against the carnage and as many protest telegrams were directed to the Viceroy.

The 13th July massacre caused great indignation all over Muslim India. The leading Indian Muslims formed an All India Kashmir Committee with a view to provide a platform for all the sympathisers of the Kashmir movement. The Committee also undertook to campaign, both at home and abroad, for the redressal of the grievances of Kashmiri Muslims. To express their resentment, against the Dogra tyranny in Kashmir, the Committee observed Kashmir Day on 14th August 1931, all over the subcontinent and beyond. Thousands of meetings and processions were held in diverse and distant places like Bombay, Peshawar, Kanpur, Patna, Delhi, Allahabad, Calcutta, Calicut, Karachi, Lahore, Poona and Rangoon. The Kashmir Committee deputed a number of lawyers to defend hundreds of Kashmiris who were being tried on charges of murder, arson and rioting. The lawyers involved in legal defence included Zafrullah Khan, a legal celebrity of the subcontinent.

The British Government convened a Round-Table Conference in London in 1931 to sort out the political and constitutional issues arising out of the Indian independence movement. During their stay in London in connexion with this conference, Allama Iqbal, Agha Khan and Zafrullah Khan met the Secretary of State for India and invited his attention to the gruesome happenings in Kashmir.

The Kashmir Government attempted to delay the implementation of the Glancy Commission report which had been submitted in March 1932. The Kashmir Committee sent a delegation

to the Viceroy, under the leadership of Zafrullah, seeking his intervention in the matter. Another delegation called on the State prime minister, Colvin and demanded release of all the political prisoners, withdrawal of repressive laws, appointment of Muslim ministers and adequate representation for Muslims in the proposed state legislature.

The All India Muslim League expressed its anguish in 1918, at the hardships experienced by the people of Kashmir. In 1924, the League deplored the Maharaja's unsympathetic attitude towards the political aspirations and educational needs of the Kashmiris. Mr. M.A. Jinnah in his presidential address to the League session at Patna in 1938, wondered as to why the Congress and its press were silent about the goings-on in Kashmir. On the contrary, Gandhiji said in a statement, at the height of the popular movement against the Maharaja, that, "Congress should not interfere in the affairs of the State."

An influential section of the pro-Congress press was openly pro-Maharaja. Tribune in its editorial of 2nd August 1931, in reference to Kashmir, said: "...agitation must be condemned by all true nationalists in India. As regards the alleged grievances of the Muslims of Kashmir, it is a matter of common knowledge that no section of the people of that State are treated with greater consideration or have less in the way of grievances than the Muslim subjects of His Highness." The Indian press was not only pro-Maharaja but resorted to contemptible rhetoric. Thus went a banner headline: "The Revolt of Muslim Slaves."

While the Kashmir Committee was engaged in a constitutional struggle for getting the grievances of Kashmiris redressed, the Ahrar organisation in Punjab, comprised of rebel Muslim Congressmen, also jumped into the fray to seek justice for the people of Kashmir. They did not consider it desirable from the religious point of view that the Kashmir movement be guided and aided by the Kashmir Committee as it was dominated by the *Ahmadis*. The Ahrars, therefore, decided to make their contribution to the

Kashmir struggle, independent of the Kashmir Committee. Incidentally, a large number of leaders of the Ahrar party were descendants of Kashmiris who had migrated from the State since 1819. One of their outstanding leaders was Syed Ataullah Kokhari from Kriri, Pattan, in the Baramulla district. In November 1931, the Ahrar volunteers stormed into the State via Mirpur, Sialkot and Kohala. Unable to cope with the situation, the Maharaja sought the Viceroy's help, who readily obliged. The British Indian troops arrested 36,000 Ahrar volunteers, many of whom were tortured and flogged. 25 Ahrars died in the Punjab jails. When the Ahrar movement, against the Maharaja, was at its peak, Sheikh Abdullah issued a statement that no outside interference was warranted in Kashmir affairs. The Ahrar party felt let down and dissociated itself from the Kashmir movement in June 1932.

Kashmiris have shown considerable fortitude in their chequered history. They also have a suicidal streak in their psyche which they expose at critical junctures. While the Dogra rulers left no stone unturned to make the people miserable, the Muslim clergy exploited their ignorance to the hilt. Two prominent clerical families, related through blood, encouraged people to fight since the fifties of the last century, in the name of trivialities, ridiculous issues and non-issues. The contentious questions involved, whether the bones of sacrificial animals were to be buried or not; whether the indigenous walnut-sized sweets (*Shirin*) were to be distributed or scattered about at the time of matrimony (*Nikah*). Nor would the two warring camps agree on the mode of penance in the face of recurrent calamities like floods and epidemics. For eighty long years the two groups fought each other with monotonous regularity. The clashes led to breakdown of law and order, injuries to combatants, loot and arson. Litigations and convictions followed. The mosques of the city of Srinagar were divided between the two clerical families and their diehard supporters.

These warring factions are notorious by labels of *Chekas* and *Kotas*. Concomitantly, Muslims were also divided into

Ahlihadis and *non-Ahlihadis* groups. Of course, Shia and Sunni mistrust was a continual affair. Shias were further subdivided into bickering factions. All these fratricidal wrangles resulted in prosecution. Non-Muslim judicial officers had to adjudicate in the sectarian brawls. It is a sad reflection on the so-called religious leaders, that instead of attempting to improve the ethical and moral standards of people, they incited their followers to tread totally irreligious paths.

While hundreds of people had embraced death in the cause of freedom struggle since July, 1931, the Muslim leadership started mutual bickerings. Sheikh Abdullah's sudden rise to popularity was exploited, at the behest of the government, by a few short-sighted businessmen and opportunistic government officials. They instilled a feeling of jealousy and mistrust in the mind of Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah. Sheikh Abdullah attracted bigger crowds and won greater ovations, causing further bitterness in the mind of the Mirwaiz whose family, only months back, wielded unchallenged prestige in Kashmir. The Government seized the opportunity, provided by the rivalry brewing up between Sheikh Abdullah and the Mirwaiz, to further its own ends.

In September 1931, while Sheikh Abdullah was in prison, Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah, was enticed by the wily prime minister, Hari Krishan Kaul. The prime minister cajoled the Mirwaiz and told him that he was greatly respected by the Government and considered in importance second only to the Maharaja; that the Government was prepared to give sympathetic consideration to Muslim demands and that the Government was willing to release Sheikh Abdullah if he desisted from making political speeches. Kaul drafted a telegram to the Viceroy on behalf of Mirwaiz, informing him that peace prevailed in Kashmir and that the Muslims were loyal to the Maharaja. The Mirwaiz signed the draft of the telegram and as a token of appreciation, an annual honorarium of Rs. 600 together with 2 rolls of English velvet, 4 rolls of China silk, a silver tray and a shawl were presented to him. This incident was widely publicised by the government. The Mirwaiz was severely criticised by the people and his

action condemned as a betrayal of the movement. He realised the blunder he had committed and returned the awards in due course, as unacceptable.

The Muslims were now divided into two principal warring camps. Those following the Mirwaiz were dubbed *Bakras* (goats) whereas Sheikh Abdullah's followers styled themselves as *Sher* (Lion). Charges and counter-charges of embezzlement of party funds and donations were freely traded. From the pulpits of mosques, vituperative language was used by both the camps against each other. The Mirwaiz accused Sheikh Abdullah of professing and promoting Ahmadi faith which the latter vehemently denied. To prove his anti-Ahmadi bonafides, Sheikh Abdullah also lashed out at the Ahmadi community and kept his distance from prominent Ahmadi leaders like Molvi Abdullah and Ghulam Nabi Gilkar.

Sheikh Abdullah accused Mirwaiz of complicity with the oppressive regime of the Maharaja with a view to sabotaging the movement. Clashes between the two irreconcilable camps occurred frequently and blighted the Kashmir politics for decades. The followers of Mirwaiz Hamdani (*Chekas*) aligned themselves with the party of Sheikh Abdullah (*Sher*).

Sheikh Abdullah was again arrested in January 1932, leading to widespread disturbances in Kashmir. The government quelled the disturbances with a heavy hand. On his release in June 1932, Sheikh Abdullah received a tremendous welcome from the people.

It was at the early stage of the mass movement that the need for the formation of a statewide political organisation was felt, but in the absence of the right of freedom of association, no steps could be taken to organise a political platform. With the government's acceptance of the Glancy Commission recommendations, which inter alia granted the freedom of association, this hurdle was overcome. The next obstacle in the path of unity was the mutual wrangles between Sheikh Abdullah and Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah. These bickerings caused considerable anguish to people in Kashmir and

their sympathisers in British India. These differences were, however, ironed out by well meaning representatives of the Kashmir Committee and the Ahrar party. With the release of political leaders in June 1932, all was set for the launching of a political party styled as All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference. The inaugural session was held on 14th, 15th & 16th October 1932 in the historic Pathar Masjid, Srinagar. Sheikh Abdullah was unanimously elected the party president and Choudhary Ghulam Abbas became the general secretary. It was a unique gathering in the sense that all the leaders buried the hatchet and attended the session. Hundreds of houseboats were hired to house the delegates. The session was attended by lakhs of people displaying unprecedented jubilation. Waliullah Zain-ul-Abidin of the Kashmir Committee performed the flag-hoisting ceremony. The party flag adopted at the session consisted of green cloth representing the Muslims, with a piece of white cloth, representing the minorities, with a crescent & star. Sheikh Abdullah, in his presidential address, recounted the miseries inflicted on people of Kashmir. He assured the minorities that the party was not directed against them and urged them to "respect our just rights". The party constitution and ten resolutions were adopted. The resolutions, inter alia, demanded freedom of speech and press, representation in services on the basis of population, recruitment of Muslims in the army, reduction in land revenue and repeal of emergency laws.

The working committee of the Muslim Conference met at Jammu, in December 1932. It called upon the government to implement the resolutions adopted by the Muslim Conference at its Srinagar session and issued a four-month ultimatum for acceptance of its demands. The party established contacts with the non-Muslim leaders and sought their cooperation in exerting influence on the government so as to get the grievances of people redressed. The non-Muslim leaders refused to cooperate. Simultaneously, Sheikh Abdullah started a mass campaign to acquaint the public with political issues and prepare them for civil disobedience. This move unnerved the government. As a conse-

quence prime minister, Colvin and home minister, Wajahat Hussain initiated negotiations with the Muslim Conference. Demands for freedom of speech, press and association were readily accepted by the government.

The truce among the Muslim leaders proved fragile. Following a provocative speech made by Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah, *Sher-Bakra* clashes occurred in January 1933, resulting in injuries and arrests. Another serious clash took place between *Chekas* and *Bakras* on the day of Eid on 6th April 1933. Hundreds of Muslims were injured, shops were looted and mosques were desecrated. *Shers* sided with *Chekas* in these encounters.

Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, a political worker with considerable organisational skill but with a little formal education, had raised a volunteer corps, one of whose wings consisted of residents of Maisuma. This "Maisuma Regiment" frequently attacked the followers of Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah. It is recorded with regret that Sheikh Abdullah gave full support to this 'Regiment'. He had been found roaming along with the hooligans with a hockey stick in his hand. The *Sher-Bakra* tussle was so intense that many matrimonial alliances were disrupted because of their antagonisms. The people of one group could not enter the strong-hold of the other without getting mauled. They called each other names and put all canons of decency to shame.

Both the Mirwaizs were chaled for breach of public peace. The district magistrate demanded sureties for keeping peace in the sum of Rs.1,000 each. While Mirwaiz Hamdani complied with, Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah refused to execute a bond. He was arrested on 27th April 1933 and jailed at Udhampur for a week.

In May 1933, yet another bout of *Sher-Bakra* clashes engulfed the city of Srinagar. Sheikh Abdullah, Bakshi and Gilkar were arrested. The city was handed over to the army. With the spread of the news of Sheikh Abdullah's arrest, hartals and processions recurred. The police resorted to indiscriminate lathi-charges, flogging and firing. Volunteers offered themselves for arrest. The

people again buried their mutual bickerings. They not only demanded the release of Sheikh Abdullah but pressed for the acceptance of political demands. A huge procession carrying green flags marched on the present Maulana Azad Road and Residency Road and stopped in front of the Nedous Hotel. The processionists squatted there for two days, despite inclement weather. Another innovation introduced in this phase of civil disobedience was the anti-government slogan shouting resorted to by the people on their house tops.

A punitive police post was set up by the government at Maisuma to realise an amount of Rs. 1828 from the people. Exemption from realisation of fine was made in favour of Hindus, Sikhs and followers of Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah. Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues were released on 7th April 1933. As usual, he received a tumultuous welcome from the people. Addressing a huge gathering at Hazuri Bagh on August 15, he acquainted people with their rights and urged them to remain united.

Pushed to the wall by the ever-increasing popularity of Sheikh Abdullah among the masses, Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah thought it necessary for his political survival to set up an organisation of his own. With the help of pro-Dogra loyalist Muslims like Assadullah Vakil, Abdur Rahim Banday and Abdul Salam Dalal, Azad Muslim Conference, came into being. The first session of this party was held at Jamia Masjid, Srinagar in November 1933 and regrettably its main theme was loyalty to the autocratic ruler. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, accompanied by his volunteers attacked the session and hurled stones to disrupt it. The unity forged amongst the Muslims of the State was thus shattered, causing irretrievable damage to the interests of people. Allama Iqbal in a letter to Sheikh Abdullah, dated 12th October, 1933 warned: "I was sorry to learn that many an organisation have recently sprung up and I have no doubt that your mutual differences will greatly obstruct your march. Unity is the only way through which you can achieve your political and social ends".

The next session of the Muslim Conference was held at Mirpur in December 1933. In recognition of his role in awakening

the people, Sheikh Abdullah was again elected the president. A number of resolutions were passed, demanding inter alia, setting up of the legislative assembly and municipalities. Non-Muslims were again requested to participate in the movement for restoration of democratic rights in the State.

Sheikh Abdullah married Akbar Jehan Begum, a divorcee, in October 1933. Her father was an Englishman named Harry Nedous who was a major shareholder in the chain of Nedous Hotels, including the one at Gulmarg. Mrs. Nedous was a Kashmiri Gujjar woman from Gulmarg. Begum Abdullah was destined to play a significant role in Kashmir politics along with her husband. They have 3 sons and 2 daughters.

In Mattan, Anantnag district, a Hindu-Muslim dispute arose in January 1934, regarding the possession of a piece of land. The government acted with patent partiality. An agitation against the government was launched by the youth on 27th January 1934. Some political activists were arrested and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment and a few others were exiled from the State. Within days, Kashmir was in the grip of a political storm. In addition to flogging, the political workers were subjected to heavy fines and being unable to pay it owing to poverty, their properties were confiscated and auctioned. Police firing in February 1934 claimed 12 lives in Pulwama and 3 in Bijbehara.

In pursuance of the recommendations of the Glancy Commission, the government appointed a Franchise Committee under the chairmanship of chief justice, Barjour Dalal. The committee, handpicked by the Maharaja, recommended the setting up of a legislative assembly consisting of 75 members. The distribution of seats was as follows: Elected Muslims 21; Elected Hindus 10; Elected Sikhs 2; nominated members 42. The right of franchise was extremely limited. For women, the right to vote was limited to those who had passed the Middle standard. On the male side, the following were eligible to vote:- landed aristocracy, Imams of mosques, Muftis, Prøhiths of temples, granthis of gurdwaras, priests of churches, a

retired pensioner, doctors, hakims, Vaid, lawyers, teachers, men who had passed Middle Standard and those who owned immovable property. Barely 3 percent of population was eligible to vote under these norms. All these measures were deliberately introduced into the election process so as to subvert and cripple the representative character of the assembly.

Choudhary Ghulam Abbas advised boycotting of elections proposed to be held in August, 1934 but he was overruled by Sheikh Abdullah. Of the elected category all the 12 non-Muslim candidates won unopposed; in the Muslim category 16 members were returned uncontested. Elections took place only in the five constituencies of Srinagar, where it was a straight fight between Muslim Conference and Azad Muslim Conference. The polling took place on 3rd September 1934 and all the five seats were bagged by Sheikh Abdullah's Muslim Conference. These results further embittered relations between the followers of Sheikh Abdullah and Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah.

Of course, the category of 42 nominated members went to apologists of the Maharaja's regime. The Maharaja retained all legislative powers and had the power of veto. The assembly was almost impotent. The first session of the assembly was held on 17th October 1934 at Shergari, Srinagar. Mian Ahmad Yar Khan of Muzaffarabad was elected leader of the Muslim Conference legislature party and Mirza Afzal Beg, the deputy leader.

The third annual session of the Muslim Conference was held at Sopore in November 1934. Mian Ahmed Yar Khan was elected the party president. The session adopted resolutions, demanding a wider franchise, larger powers for the assembly, implementation of Glancy Commission recommendations, opening of industries and improvement in the health and education sectors.

Reference has already been made to the prevalence of flesh trade in Kashmir. The sale of young girls to established houses of ill-fame in Srinagar and India was both protected and encouraged by the Dogra rulers. In 1880, the Maharaja received 15-25 percent of

his revenue from the gains of his licensed prostitutes. In 1924, a barber named Mohammed Subhan who had a shop in the vicinity of Palladium Cinema at Amira Kadal, launched a crusade against immoral traffic. The politicians and religious leaders of the day regrettably cold-shouldered his campaign. Along with Tyndale Biscoe, an English missionary, Mohammed Subhan educated people through posters, pamphlets and street corner meetings, about the immoral trade conducted at Tashwan and Maisuma in Srinagar. They picketed at these dens and earned the wrath of police. Luckily, Dr. Kathleen Vaughan, a British lady-doctor serving in Kashmir at the time, raised the matter of the plight of Kashmiri women at the League of Nations, in Geneva. The League admonished the British Government about the goings-on in Kashmir. The British took quick remedial measures and asked the Maharaja to put an end to shameless practices. Consequently, immoral traffic of women in Kashmir was banned in 1934. The selfless and abiding service rendered by Mohammed Subhan has earned him deep gratitude of the people of Kashmir.

Reference has already been made to Prem Nath Bazaz's constructive role in the formulation of Glancy Commission recommendations. He was anxious to see that the legitimate grievances of Muslims are redressed and a progressive form of government established in the State. Sheikh Abdullah and Bazaz met on a historic afternoon, in July 1932 in the Chashma Shahi garden, to thrash out various ideological issues. It was resolved at this meeting that the freedom movement should be conducted on 'secular, democratic and progressive lines'. Though the implementation of their resolve was postponed indefinitely owing to unsuitable political climate, Sheikh Abdullah and Bazaz continued to keep in close touch with each other. The Muslim Conference issued appeals several times to the non-Muslims, to cooperate in winning political rights of the people. The two leaders jointly started *Hamdard*, a weekly journal, on 1st August 1935 to popularise "progressive nationalism". 'Hamdard' was publicly inaugurated by a Congressman of Kashmiri

descent named Dr. Saif-ud-Din Kitchlu.

Before meeting Sheikh Abdullah in person, Nehru used Kitchlu as an intermediary in his relations with him. The Pandit community established contacts with the Congress to devise measures against the growing popularity of the Muslim Conference. In spite of their misgivings about the Muslim Conference, the Pandits started cultivating Sheikh Abdullah's friendship.

The fourth session of the Muslim Conference was held at Pathar Masjid in October 1935. Many non-Muslims including P.N. Bazaz, Kashp Bandu, Jia Lal Kilam and Sham Lal Saraf attended the session as observers. Choudhary Abbas in his presidential address said; "Let us all join together to struggle for the emancipation of our country. I hope the non-Muslims will consider my appeal courageously and honestly."

In 1935, the British Government enforced a constitutional measure known as the Government of India Act of 1935. At the provincial level, it introduced a limited autonomy, while at the centre it envisaged a Federation, consisting of both the British India as well as the princely states. The Muslim Conference demanded that the Maharaja should not join the Federation without prior consultation with the peoples representatives. In case the state was compelled to join the Federation, only the elected representatives of people should have the right to sit in the Federal parliament.

The Maharaja leased Gilgit to the British Government, in March 1935, for a period of 60 years. With the rise to power of Marxist regime in the Soviet Union in 1917, communism had arrived at the door step of Kashmir across the Pamirs. The British considered this development a threat to their imperial interests and hence took over Gilgit under their direct rule.

The fifth session of the Muslim Conference was held at Poonch, in May 1937. Sheikh Abdullah in his presidential address demanded a genuinely representative assembly and a responsible government and sought cooperation of the non-Muslims in getting rid

of the "irresponsible government".

Fresh elections were held to the assembly in 1938. In spite of the electorate being barely 3% of the population, the Muslim Conference made a clean sweep of all the 21 Muslim seats. A meeting of the General Council of the party was held in 1938. It expressed solidarity with the people of Palestine. The Council also demanded the appointment of Muslims from the state as prime minister and chief secretary. It may be noted that of the 28 prime ministers appointed in Kashmir since 1846, no Muslim ever held the post until 1948. The Maharaja instead appointed Sir Abdul Samad and Nawab Khusro Jung, both non-State subjects, as ministers.

CHAPTER 11

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE

With the growing popularity of the Muslim Conference and its leader Sheikh Abdullah, the Pandit Community, the Indian National Congress and the Indian press were seized by a sense of unease. Through assiduous efforts, Prem Nath Bazaz won over Sheikh Abdullah to the So-called nationalist approach to politics. Jawaharlal Nehru, with his political acumen, realised that the key to Kashmir lay with Sheikh Abdullah. He sent Dr. Saif-ud-Din Kitchlu, a Congressman of Kashmiri descent, to exchange political views with Sheikh Abdullah. Dr. Kitchlu soon succeeded in gaining the confidence of Sheikh Abdullah. Nehru conveyed to the Kashmiri leader that apart from the Muslims of Kashmir, it is the non-Muslim population also which is oppressed in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Sheikh Abdullah concurred.

Delivering the inaugural address on the occasion of launching of *Hamdard*, a local Urdu newspaper, Dr. Kitchlu said on 1st August 1935: "Kashmir is a part of India and in the proposed Federation, the princely states will work together with the rest of the country." Sheikh Abdullah applauded the speech and on this occasion slogans like *Mahatma Gandhi Zindabad*, *Nehru Zindabad* and *Inqilab Zindabad* were raised. Sheikh Abdullah praised Kitchlu's concern regarding the slavery of Kashmiris and declared that Iqbal, Nehru and Kitchlu stood for political emancipation of the people of Kashmir. *Hamdard* espoused the cause of 'progressive nationalism' as opposed to 'communalism'. Sheikh Abdullah accused the politicians and press of the Punjab of introducing communalism into Kashmir.

The Muslim Conference accorded a warm reception to the Muslim League leader Mohammad Ali Jinnah on 3rd June 1936, at Pather Masjid and pledged its total support and loyalty to

him. On 10th June, 1936 Sheikh Abdullah and P.N. Bazaz jointly addressed a letter to Nehru inviting him to visit Kashmir and assured him of their loyalty and pledged themselves to uphold his ideology! Paradoxical have been the ways of Sheikh Abdullah.

Nehru and Sheikh Abdullah met for the first time at the Lahore railway station, at the beginning of the year 1937. The two leaders, alongwith Gaffar Khan, left for a tour of the Frontier Province. After his meetings with Nehru, Sheikh Abdullah was intoxicated with the Congress brand of nationalism and the hangover never deserted him till his end. He became an appendage of the Indian National Congress. It is widely believed that the State Prime Minister, Ayyenger, a South Indian bureaucrat, enjoying close ties with the Congress leaders, played a significant role in persuading Sheikh Abdullah to opt for Congress-oriented politics in the State. The stage was set for burial of the Muslim Conference.

The sixth annual session of the Muslim Conference was held at Jammu in March 1938. Sheikh Abdullah in his address said: "The demand for responsible government is not meant only for 80% Muslims of the State but for all its inhabitants; therefore, it is necessary to march together with the 20% non-Muslims of the State. We must open our doors to all such Hindus and Sikhs, who like ourselves, believe in freeing the country from the shackles of an irresponsible rule." The non-Muslim leaders insisted that they would join the struggle only after the name and the flag of the Muslim Conference were changed. The Working Committee of the Conference recommended on 28th June 1938, that the name and the constitution of the party be so altered and amended as to allow people to join the organisation irrespective of their caste or creed. The Responsible Government Demand Day was observed on 5th August 1938, in which leaders of all denominations participated. Sheikh Abdullah, P.N. Bazaz, J.L. Killam and G.M. Sadiq addressed a political rally at Hazratbal on 27th August 1938, in defiance of prohibitory orders. Sheikh Abdullah and other leaders were arrested. Hartal and processions followed. The non-Muslims, by and large,

abstained from the agitation. Two people died in police firing, scores were injured and one thousand people were arrested.

The lack of interest evinced by the non-Muslims in the movement made the educated Muslims apprehensive and they wondered about the wisdom of dismantling the Muslim Conference. But, unfortunately, no leader of standing had the courage to stand upto Sheikh Abdullah. The General Council of the Muslim Conference met in April 1939 and endorsed the Working Committee's resolution of 28th June 1938. Consequently, a special session of the party was held at Srinagar on 10th June 1939, under the presidentship of G.M. Sadiq. The Muslim Conference was buried and the National Conference took its birth. According to P.N. Bazaz, the changeover was opposed by only 3 delegates out of a total of 176. Maulvi Abdullah walked out in protest. Chaudry Hameedullah of Jammu while opposing the move said: "National Conference will not be able to work for the Muslims.... It is futile to expect cooperation from the Kashmiri Pandits as their politics is confined to services alone". Choudhary Abbas, Afzal Beg, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, Maulvi Masoodi and A.R. Saghar supported the formation of National Conference. Choudhary Abbas, however, was not sure that the non-Muslims would sincerely support the freedom struggle as they would prefer the Dogra rule to a democratic dispensation. He also feared that the National Conference would become a handmaiden of the Indian National Congress because Sheikh Abdullah was drawing support and inspiration from Nehru. He was, however, assured by Sheikh Abdullah and Bazaz that the organisation would keep aloof from both the Congress and the Muslim League. On these assurances, Abbas gave his full support to the birth of National Conference. The public by and large, was resentful about the winding up of Muslim Conference, the views and attitudes of their leaders notwithstanding.

The first session of the National Conference was held at Anantnag from September 30 to October 2 1939. The party flag, consisting of red cloth with the sign of a white plough inscribed

in its centre, was adopted. By a resolution, the National Conference appreciated the statement issued by the Congress regarding the political aspirations of the Indian people.

Sheikh Abdullah set up a religious body named the *Auqaf* Committee 'to administer the revered Hazratbal Shrine and to look after other Muslim endowments.' In spite of Sheikh Abdullah's decision to toe the Congress line, against the Muslim interests, the Kashmiri pandits ridiculed his 'nationalism' and condemned him as "a rank communalist". J.L. Killam and Kashap Bandhu resigned from National Conference in April 1940.

Nehru arrived in Srinagar on 30th May 1940, on the invitation of the National Conference. This was his second visit to Kashmir, the first being in 1916.

Nehru toured Kashmir for 10 days and advised the non-Muslims, at a meeting held at Sheetal Nath temple, Srinagar, to join the National Conference and strengthen the hands of Sheikh Abdullah. This did not have any significant effect on the attitude of non-Muslims towards Sheikh Abdullah. The river procession organised in honour of Nehru was disturbed by hostile people owing allegiance to Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah. The protestors remained stark naked on the banks of river Jehlum. The non-Muslims opposed the observance of the Martyrs' Day on 13th July, as in their opinion the occasion commemorated an anti-Hindu movement. Sheikh Abdullah over-ruled them and went ahead with the function.

Disgusted with the hostile attitude of non-Muslims towards the National Conference and Sheikh Abdullah's apologetic stance towards the Pandit community, a number of prestigious leaders like C. Abbas, G.A. Ashai, G.N. Gilkar, and Yaqub Ali parted company with the National Conference and Sheikh Abdullah. Ironically, Sheikh Abdullah himself started getting disillusioned with his 'nationalist' creed owing to non-Muslim hostility towards him. He realised that conversion of the Muslim Conference into National Conference had eroded his Muslim base without any corresponding non-Muslim support.

Hindu-Muslim clashes occurred in Zaina Kadal area of Srinagar in April 1941, following the hooliganism of National Conference activists. Addressing a public meeting in Srinagar on 28th July 1941, Sheikh Abdullah asked: "What is the use of preaching nationalism to Pandits who cannot even tolerate the washing of hands and face by us on the banks of Jehlum?"

National Conference held its annual session in Srinagar in August 1941. Sardar Budh Singh presided over the session. Gaffar Khan attended the function as an emissary of the Congress. He characterised Sheikh Abdullah as a 'divine gift to Kashmir'. The party reiterated its demand of a 'responsible government' for the State. A grand *Mushaira*, attended by the famous poet, Hafeez Jallundari and Sir Abdul Qadir, a legal luminary, was held in connexion with the party session.

A large number of political activists and leaders, dissatisfied with the switch-over from Muslim Conference to National Conference, revived the Muslim Conference on 10th October 1940. These leaders included Chaudry Hameedullah, Mohammad Yusuf Qureshi and Syed Hassan Shah Jalali. Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah joined the party through the good offices of Abdul Salam Dalal. The Muslim Conference workers, led by Yusuf Qureshi, attempted to capture Mujahid Manzil, the seat of the original Muslim Conference but the National Conference volunteers led by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, thwarted their attempts.

Meanwhile, the Muslim League had acquired considerable influence and prestige as an authentic representative body of Muslims of the subcontinent. The Pakistan Resolution had been passed in Lahore on 23rd March 1940.

During his April 1942 visit to Delhi, Sheikh Abdullah was instructed by the Congress to strengthen his party at the grass roots level. On his return to Kashmir, he made highly provocative speeches against the Muslim Conference and its leadership. Widespread clashes broke out in Srinagar in October 1942, in which the National Conference workers got the better of their Muslim

Conference counterparts. Muslim League and Muslim Conference flags, sign boards and posters were destroyed. The National Conference supporters looted the houses and shops of their opponents. Sheikh Abdullah forcibly occupied the Hazratbal and Khanyar Shrines which had hitherto, been under the control of Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah. Prime Minister Ayyenger's administration connived at the fascist conduct of the National Conference and as a token of gratitude, the party workers shouted slogans like '*Ayyenger Zindabad*'. The annual Muslim Conference session held in August 1943 was violently disrupted by the National Conference sympathisers.

Ayyenger was unpopular throughout his more than 6 years (1937-43) stay as Prime Minister, owing to his anti-Muslim policies. He promulgated the anti-people constitution of 1939 and imposed Devanagiri script of Urdu instead of the prevailing Persian script. He allowed only the Hindu Rajputs to keep arms. Ayyenger's policies were universally resented in Kashmir and as a token of protest, even the National Conference members of the Assembly had resigned enblock. The Muslim League leader, M.A. Jinnah stepped in and pleaded with the Viceroy about Ayyenger's unhealthy policies. Ayyenger was consequently removed from the post of Prime Minister in April 1943. His exit was celebrated by the Muslim Conference as Deliverance Day.

Conscious of the prestige acquired by the Muslim League in British India, Sheikh Abdullah met M.A. Jinnah at Delhi in Feb. 1944 and invited him, on behalf of the National Conference to visit Kashmir. Jinnah already had a standing invitation from the Muslim Conference. It may be recalled here that Jinnah's previous visits to Kashmir in 1926 and 1936 were essentially private ones. Jinnah entered the State via Suchetgarh on 8th May 1944. He received a tumultuous welcome all the way from Jammu to Srinagar. An unprecedented welcome was accorded to Jinnah by both the National Conference and the Muslim Conference. A public reception was held by the National Conference in honour of Jinnah on 10th May at Partap Park, Srinagar. The slogans raised on the occasion included

Quad-i-Azam Zindabad, Islam Zindabad, Sher-i-Kashmir Zindabad, National Conference Zindabad and *League Congress Unite*. A Pandit leader, J. L. Killam read the welcome address. In his brief speech, Jinnah said: "I thank you all for the royal welcome accorded to me, but it was not meant for my person; it was meant for the All India Muslim League, of which I am the President. You have honoured the Muslims of India. Ten crore Muslims of India support your struggle for freedom." J.L. Killam resented Jinnah's reference to the Muslim League and staged a walk out. An unpleasant situation occurred for a brief spell.

Jinnah was taken in a procession from Pratap Park to Dalgate where he addressed the Muslim Conference rally. He said: "Kashmir is a Muslim majority State. Muslims have one God, one Prophet and One Book. The Muslims of Kashmir should have a single objective and one voice only and should unite under one organisation for the freedom struggle."

During his 6 weeks stay in Kashmir, Jinnah met a wide cross-section of people, including leaders of the National Conference and the Muslim Conference, the youth, journalists, workers and representatives of the minorities. In spite of great efforts, Jinnah could not win over Sheikh Abdullah to his political point of view. He impressed on Sheikh Abdullah that he himself had embarked on 'nationalist politics' but had to part company with the Congress leaders owing to their double standards in politics. The gulf between the leadership of the Muslim Conference and the National Conference remained unbridged, Jinnah's intervention notwithstanding. The main factors responsible for the breakdown of unity efforts were Sheikh Abdullah's insincerity and Abbas' intransigence and intemperate utterances. This fiasco marks a watershed in Kashmir politics and history. Muslim Conference cast its lot with the Muslim League and the Pakistan movement while National Conference tilted towards the Congress openly.

The annual session of the Muslim Conference was held at Jamia Masjid, Srinagar on 17th June, 1944. Addressing the

session, Jinnah said: "I have heard of your problems, oppression and hardships. I have also found that among the people who met me, 99% support the Muslim Conference.....I did my best to make the National Conference workers understand the logic of the argument but I was told that they want to tell the world that there was no communalism in the State and behind the curtain of nationalism, they want to pursue the programme of Muslim Conference and that they were supporters of Pakistan. I say that the Congress had adopted the same method in British India. They claimed to represent all Indians but were in fact a Hindu organisation. Do you also want to practise this deception? Please do not think that we bear any enmity towards the Hindus and the Sikhs or that we do not respect their religion, culture or philosophy. We only want justice. Oh, Muslims! awake, stand up, work hard and bring life to this dead nation. There is only one way to do it and that is unity, solidarity, a single flag, a single platform and an ideal. If you are able to achieve them, you must succeed."

Sheikh Abdullah launched a vituperative attack on Jinnah and used his workers to throw stones and shoes at Jinnah's Baramulla rally. By publicly insulting Jinnah whom he had invited to visit Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah displayed his moral bankruptcy. Subsequently, Jinnah described Abdullah as "that tall man who misleads people of Kashmir by singing the Quran!"

C. K. Sharda, a Hindu Mahasaba leader, addressed a rally of Hindus at Anantnag, Kashmir, while Jinnah was still touring the Valley. He remarked: "We do not recognise the National Conference as long as Sheikh Abdullah heads it." It is interesting to note that both Jinnah and Sharda considered Sheikh Abdullah untrustworthy. He was despised by leaders of both the major Indian communities.

To offset any possible damage to the National Conference on account of the Jinnah visit and the rising popularity of the Muslim Conference, the Congress employed all its material and human resources to keep Sheikh Abdullah aligned to itself. By cementing personal and political bonds with Abdullah, the Congress

leaders succeeded in controlling his actions and thoughts. Mrs. Indira Gandhi's first visit to Kashmir in 1942 went a long way in promoting closer bonds between the Nehru family and the Abdullah family. Mrs. Gandhi and Mridula Sarabhai spent the summer of 1944 and 1945 in Kashmir with a view to strengthen Sheikh-Congress ties.

The Communist Party of India was also keen to fish in the political waters of Kashmir. Organised communist activity in the State dates back to 1937 when Dr. Ashraf, Nehru's personal secretary and one Faiz Ahmed Piracha started a study circle in Srinagar, to propagate communism among the educated youth. P.C. Joshi and Fazl Qurban, two leading Indian communists visited Srinagar in 1939. The first known Kashmiri politician won over by the Indian communists in 1941 was G.M. Sadiq, then a member of the State Assembly. B.P.L. Bedi and his wife, Freda entered Kashmir to carry on the Marxist crusade. Their initial success in winning adherents to communism was so astonishing that they were permanently accredited to Kashmir by the Communist Party. The Marxists became an influential lobby within the National Conference. Under their influence, the National Conference adopted in its September 1944 session, the programme of 'New Kashmir'. The manifesto enshrined revolutionary ideals and objectives in political, economic and social spheres. Owing to lack of enthusiasm, the National Conference leadership never implemented the manifesto seriously.

People in Kashmir were groaning under poverty and prohibitive prices. The communist wing of the National Conference forged an alliance, with the Muslim Conference and a Pandit organisation called the Sanatan Dharam, to launch a popular agitation against the scarcity of food and fuel. A number of public meetings were organised by leaders of all the three organisations. The Government noted the public mood and made satisfactory arrangements for the supply and distribution of rice and fuel.

Pandit Nehru, along with a few other senior Congress leaders, visited Kashmir in July 1945 in order to attend the Sopore session of the National Conference. The recently

concluded successful session of the Muslim Conference at Poonch had caused the Congress leaders grave anxiety. A river procession was organised to welcome the Congress leaders. Protest demonstrations on the banks of Jehlum were staged by pro-Muslim Conference and pro-Muslim League people. Stones and Shoes were hurled at the procession and pro-Pakistan slogans were raised. After the procession was over, the National Conference workers resorted to hooliganism and let loose a reign of terror all over the city.

In order to achieve a political settlement in the subcontinent and to discuss the modalities of transfer of power, the British Government convened the Simla Conference in June, 1945. The conference ended in failure because of the refusal of Congress to recognise the Muslim League as the sole representative body of Muslims of India. Consequently, elections were held to the central and provincial assemblies in 1945-46 winter. All the 33 Muslim seats in the Central Legislature were captured by the League. In the provincial elections, barring the N.W.F.P., the Muslim League won 90% seats in the Muslim majority provinces. These impressive results made it clear that transfer of power could not occur without the prior agreement of the League. This power equation had its fall out in Kashmir too. Muslim hostility towards the National Conference was exacerbated. The National Conference continued to be unpopular with the non-Muslims. Prime Minister, R.C. Kak was hostile towards Sheikh Abdullah. The majority of workers of the National Conference felt guilty of disrupting Muslim solidarity. In view of all these momentous developments, fresh efforts were made by the National Conference to seek merger with the Muslim Conference. The stumbling block in the merger moves was the Muslim Conference refusal to let Sheikh Abdullah preside over the unified party.

The Congress and the Communist party jumped into the political arena of Kashmir to prevent the merger of principal political parties in Kashmir. Financial inducements were offered to the National Conference leadership. Sheikh Abdullah, accompanied by Indian Communist activists like B.P.L. Bedi, Dr. Ashraf and

Ahsan Danish addressed a public meeting at Nawakadal on 19th April, 1946. He made venomous attacks against the Muslim Conference and the League. Hameedullah and A.S. Dalal of the Muslim Conference retaliated publicly, in Nowhatta Chowk, on 24th April, by accusing Sheikh Abdullah of taking money from the Congress and the communists in order to disrupt Muslim unity. Thus, the break between the National Conference and the Muslim Conference was irretrievable.

The British Government sent a Cabinet Mission to India in 1946 for evolving an agreed basis for the transfer of power. The Mission visited Srinagar from 19th to 24th April. Sheikh Abdullah sent them the following memorandum:-

“Today the national demand of the people of Kashmir is not merely the establishment of a system of responsible government, but their right to absolute freedom from the autocratic rule of the Dogra House.”

Sheikh Abdullah was desperately looking for a magic wand to bolster his sagging image. His communist friends - Bedi, Ashraf, Saif-ud-Din Kitchlu and M.D. Taseer came to his rescue by suggesting the slogan of “Quit Kashmir”.

Sheikh Abdullah launched the movement with a highly provocative speech in Srinagar on 15th May '46, demanding that the Maharaja quit Kashmir. He was arrested on charges of treason. Bakshi and Sadiq conducted the campaign against the Maharaja in Lahore, Delhi and Bombay. Mohi-ud-Din Kara went underground and through his skilled leadership of the Quit Kashmir agitation became a hero. For more than a year he steered the movement incognito. The law and order situation deteriorated rapidly. Twenty Muslims were killed and hundreds wounded in police firing and about 3000 people were arrested. The movement electrified the political atmosphere in Kashmir. The prestige of National Conference boomed.

The Congress and its powerful press condemned the movement and instead supported the Maharaja. The Congress

leadership realised that Hari Singh was going to be a key figure in the ultimate political destiny of the State. Nehru, singularly, took a different attitude and condemned the repression let loose on the people of Kashmir. In a statement on 27th May 1946, he said: "Srinagar had become a city of dead." Just as the Congress leadership did not desire to offend the Maharaja, Nehru was equally keen not to lose grip on Abdullah. Consequently, Nehru entered the State on 20th June '46, to express his solidarity with the National Conference. Owing to Nehru's defiance of the ban imposed by the State Government on his entry into Kashmir, he was arrested at the Domel custom post and lodged in the Uri Rest House for 2 days. This development created a big stir in Delhi where the Cabinet Mission was involved in very crucial parleys with the leading political leaders of the country. Lord Wavell, the Viceroy, intervened in the matter and arranged a special plane on 22nd June to bring back Nehru from Srinagar. The Congress Working Committee, realising Nehru's keenness to visit Srinagar prevailed upon Hari Singh to waive the ban order.

Nehru arrived in Srinagar on 27th July 1946. He held a meeting with Sheikh Abdullah in the Badami Bagh Cantonment. Sheikh Abdullah asked Nehru to arrange for his legal defence. Asaf Ali, a leading barrister and a Congressman, stoutly defended the accused in the trial. However, the Session Court found Sheikh Abdullah guilty of treason and sentenced him to 3 years imprisonment.

Quit Kashmir agitation helped the National Conference to gain political mileage which they had lost during the past 5 years. The Muslim Conference leaders were unnerved by the growing popularity of the National Conference. They started searching for a pretext to start an agitation against the Government. In a secret conference held at Srinagar, the top leadership of the Muslim Conference held discussions with Sir Zafrullah Khan of the Muslim League. They examined the proposition of launching a civil disobedience movement followed by an armed insurrection. The Conference decided to contact ex-servicemen from Poonch, Mirpur,

Reasi and Bhimber who had fought for the Allies in the Second World War. The whole plan was torpedoed by the Mirwaiz who leaked it to R.C. Kak, the Prime Minister, with whom he had been collaborating for quite sometime.

The Muslim Conference deemed it opportune to demand constitutional and political rights. In a resolution passed on 24th August 1946, the Muslim Conference said:

“ The unrepresentative and autocratic government should be immediately brought to an end and the people granted the right to frame a constitution of their own liking by a constituent assembly which will in the light of its special requirements frame a constitution for Azad Kashmir as it deems fit The Maharaja will recognise the legitimate rights of the State people to determine their own future.”

Much against the wishes of Jinnah, Choudhary Abbas along with other Muslim Conference leaders, courted arrest on 25th October 1946 by defying a ban on public meetings. This was a catastrophic move. It exposed the weakness of the organisation and unmasked the mess that was Muslim Conference at the time. Hameedullah and Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah quarrelled over succession to the presidency of the party after the arrest of Choudhary Abbas. Mirwaiz aligned himself openly with R.C.Kak and described the Maharaja as, “ God's shadow on earth.” Muslim unity which had received a great blow at the hands of Sheikh Abdullah was further enfeebled. Prime minister Kak acted as a catalyst in the crumbling unity of Muslims.

The Maharaja ordered elections to the state assembly in November 1946. Polling took place on 3rd and 4th January 1947. In spite of the fact that Muslim Conference was divided into two warring camps led by Hameedullah and Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah, yet the National Conference was routed. Of the 21 elected seats, the Muslim Conference bagged 15. The National Conference leadership felt humiliated and realised that apart from the non-Muslims, the mood among the Muslims also was predominantly against their spurious

brand of 'nationalist politics'.

CHAPTER 12

THE ACCESSION CONSPIRACY AND THE UNITED NATIONS

The Indian elections of 1945-46 made it crystal clear that Muslim League represented the political will of the Muslims of India. Muslim League had passed the Pakistan Resolution in March 1940, demanding a separate homeland for the Muslim-majority provinces of India. Indian National Congress stood for a united India. Muslims of India had genuine apprehensions about their future in a Hindu-dominated polity. The Labour Govt. of the United Kingdom sent a Cabinet Mission to India in March 1946 to discuss with the representatives of India, the question of transfer of power. The Cabinet Mission plan announced on 16th May 1946, very skilfully tried to reconcile the conflicting views of the Congress and the Muslim League. The Plan envisaged a central government for a united India to which would exclusively be given the charge of three subjects - defence, foreign affairs and communications. The other subjects of governance would be vested in the provinces. The Plan also provided for creation of three zones in British India; one zone would consist of Bengal and Assam; the second zone would be constituted by Punjab, Sindh, N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan; the rest of British India would be the third zone. Each zone would frame its own Constitution and any province would have the right to secede. This scheme guaranteed complete internal autonomy to provinces. The Cabinet Mission plan injected confidence into the Muslims of India and allayed genuine fears of the Muslim League. The Plan had the overriding advantage of keeping India united. This Plan was accepted by both the principal political parties. Jubilation, at the prospect of winning independence of united India without recrimination and bloodshed, was widespread. Nehru, the Congress president, however, publicly repudiated his party's commitment to the

Plan. Consequently, the Muslim League reconsidered its position and revoked its earlier acceptance of the Plan. The League demanded Pakistan. Thus Congress imposed partition of India. As a corollary, Lord Mountbatten, the Viceroy announced the partition plan of British India on 3rd June 1947. It envisaged the creation of two dominions of India and Pakistan. With regard to the 562 princely states, the Indian Independence Act of 18th July 1947 kept the option of accession to either dominion in the hands of the concerned rulers. After the lapse of British paramountcy on the 14th August 1947, the princely states had 3 options before them; namely, declaration of independence, accession to India or accession to Pakistan.

The Congress leaders were opposed to declaration of independence by the states whereas Jinnah was clearly of the view that the states were constitutionally entitled to resume their independence after the lapse of British paramountcy. The most tragic part of the partition plan was the contempt with which the British Government treated inhabitants of the princely states. Whereas the people of British India had the option of choosing either of the two dominions, the people in the princely states were denied this right. In the case of Kashmir, the tragedy was all the more glaring as Hari Singh, the Hindu Maharaja was to be the sole arbiter of the destiny of people, 80% of whom were Muslims. Hari Singh's great-grandfather had purchased Kashmir from the British in 1846 behind the backs of people concerned and now 101 years later, Hari Singh was empowered by the British Government to make a momentous decision on behalf of Kashmiris without their knowledge or consent! This perverse stand of the British Government suited the Congress because Hari Singh could be prevailed upon to fall in line with India's interests whereas the people of Kashmir could not be trusted to opt for India voluntarily. As the 15th of August, the date of partition and independence, was nearing the principal actors on the political stage of the two dominions were busy in seducing Kashmir, if possible, and scheming to grab it forcibly, if necessary. The Maharaja and his prime

minister R.C.Kak were toying with the idea of Independent Kashmir. R.C. Kak had, in a written note, advised the Maharaja to remain independent at least for one year and then take an appropriate decision in the light of developments and requirements. Kak had a meeting with Jinnah in Delhi on 19th July 1947 and it is believed that the latter had not shown any displeasure about the Kak Plan. Lack of enthusiasm on the part of Hari Singh and R. C. Kak for an outright accession to India was because of their shared antipathy towards Nehru who, they knew, was destined to be India's prime minister. Nehru reciprocated their abhorrence in equal measure. Secondly, both Hari Singh and Kak detested Sheikh Abdullah who was undoubtedly pro-Congress and pro-India and was likely to assume power in case of State's accession to India. They both feared reprisals at the hands of Sheikh Abdullah, in collaboration with Nehru. Jinnah issued a statement in Delhi on 11th July 1947 saying that Hari Singh had 3 options open to him - accession to Pakistan, accession to India or independence. He did not call for accession to Pakistan. Meanwhile, the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference in its convention of 19th July '47 demanded outright accession to Pakistan. The Kisan Mazdoor Conference, headed by P. N. Bazar, in its resolution of 5th September, '47 also demanded the State's accession to Pakistan. Mountbatten and Nehru were the best of friends for a number of years. Mountbatten 'delighted in Nehru's charm, his culture, his quick humour'. Their friendship gave a decisive advantage to Congress and the dominion of India. In the partition plan of 3rd June 1947 Gurdaspur district of Punjab (with a Muslim majority) was shown as part of Pakistan. This plan precluded India's easy access to Kashmir. Thanks to Mountbatten's unscrupulous conduct, the district was partitioned in a manner so as to provide a direct and easy communication between Kashmir and India.

Mountbatten's vanity impelled him to dream of becoming Governor-General of both India and Pakistan. Muslim League flatly refused his suggestion. Mountbatten was so crestfallen at the rebuff that he threatened Jinnah: "It may well cost you the

whole of your assets and the future of Pakistan". He was now openly anti- Pakistan and only too eager to damage the Pakistan interests as much as he could. He translated his threats into unjust actions. He used his Viceregal authority and royal prestige in pushing hundreds of unwilling princes into the Indian dominion; he unjustly partitioned Gurdaspur and unfairly awarded the Muslim majority area of Ferozapore to India; he took the responsibility of securing accession of Kashmir to India. Nehru had won over Sheikh Abdullah ideologically to his side in the mid-thirties. It was Hari Singh who was a hard nut to crack for the Congress. Immense political and personal pressure was mounted on him in order to enlist his cooperation in securing Kashmir's accession to India. In his family, Hari Singh had 3 staunch supporters for accession to India. They were - his wife, Tara Devi; Karan Singh, the only son and the royal priest known as Raj Guru. The Congress utilised the services of Maharajas of Kapurthala, Patiala and Faridkot to win over Hari Singh to the Indian dominion. Sardar Patel sent Col. B. M. Koul (later Lt. General Koul) to reassure Hari Singh that he need entertain no problems for himself after Kashmir's accession to India. Acharya Kripalani, the Congress president had a long meeting with Hari Singh on 24th May '47 at Srinagar, to play his part in the accession conspiracy. Consequent upon his open alliance with the Congress, Mountbatten undertook a visit to Kashmir in June 1947. He urged Hari Singh not to make any declaration of independence and the latter assured him that accession to Pakistan was out of the question. Hari Singh, however, evaded the issue of accession to India as he feared loss of power and privilege in that situation. The crafty Mountbatten offered military assistance to Hari Singh in order to maintain the territorial integrity of Kashmir.

It is a sad commentary on the character of Mountbatten that he was hellbent on punishing Kashmiris in order to avenge his hurt pride at the hands of the Muslim League leaders who denied him the desire of becoming Governor-General of both the dominions.

The Congress High Command, in consultation

with Mountbatten, decided to send Gandhiji to Kashmir. His arrival in Srinagar on 1st August'47 was marked by pro-Pakistan demonstrations. He held extensive discussions with the Maharaja and his family members. He also had meetings with Prime Minister Kak and Begum Abdullah. Gandhiji played the dual roles of saint and politician. When Tara Devi offered him a cup of milk, he publicly played the saint by saying: "Gandhi does not drink the milk of a ruler whose people were unhappy". Yet his political mission was to perpetuate the misery of the very people for whom he was ostensibly shedding tears. It is recorded with regret that when Gandhiji was asked to comment on Kashmir's future status in a public meeting held at Mujahid Manzil, Srinagar he pleaded 'abstinence from talking' as an excuse in order to avoid revealing his feelings publicly and the purpose of his visit to Kashmir. While Gandhiji religiously maintained his abstinence from talking with the common Kashmiri, he displayed no fads in his extensive parleys with Hari Singh and his anti-Kashmiri advisers ! From circumstantial evidence it appears that Gandhiji's mission had 3 main objectives. The first was to seek removal of R.C. Kak as State's prime minister and his replacement by a trusted pro-Indian yesman; secondly, to get Sheikh Abdullah released from jail and encourage cooperation between him and Hari Singh; thirdly to assure Hari Singh that his interests would be safeguarded in India after the accession. The Congress leaders were certain that R.C. Kak was the author of independence formula and his continued presence in office would be prejudicial to Indian interests. The pro-India lobby surrounding Hari Singh received immense encouragement by Gandhiji's visit. R.C. Kak was dismissed from office on 11th August'47 and replaced by Janak Singh. This move had Sheikh Abdullah's approval also who was kept informed in jail about the momentous developments. Kak's dismissal signalled Hari Singh's lack of interest in Independent Kashmir and he perceptibly moved towards the Indian dominion. Kak's only crime was his belief that forcible annexation of Kashmir by India would create long term problems. Events of the last 44 years have substantiated

R.C.Kak's genuine apprehensions.

Begum Abdullah assured Gandhiji of her family's continued loyalty to Congress. P.N. Bazaz, a liberal Hindu intellectual, informed Gandhiji of the fascist nature of the National Conference and the persecution which the Muslim Conference workers and members of the minority community were subjected to by the National Conference hooligans. It may be recalled that Bazaz himself became the victim of a murderous assault by the National Conference workers when he was shot at and injured on 12th March 1946.

The political and ideological loyalties of the principal actors in Kashmir were more or less well known on the eve of partition of India. The Maharaja and his prime minister and the National Conference had lined up with the Congress whereas the great majority of the people were against accession to India. Clashes between supporters of the National Conference and the Muslim Conference were widespread. The Maharaja's government entered into a Standstill Agreement with the Govt. of Pakistan on the 12th of August '47. The Post & Telegraph Offices of the State were operated by Pakistan under the Standstill Agreement. Pakistan flag was hoisted on post offices but Janak Singh, the Prime Minister, ordered their removal. This was a clear demonstration of the Dogra Maharaja's hatred towards Pakistan. India refused the State's offer for a Standstill Agreement.

To tighten the conspiratorial grip on Kashmir, Sardar Patel succeeded in getting M.C. Mahajan, an avowed pro-Congress Punjabi, appointed as prime minister of Kashmir on 18th September '47. Describing his meeting with Nehru after assuming office, Mahajan relates: "I told Nehru that the Maharaja was willing to accede to India Nehru asked me to see that Sheikh Abdullah was set free". Mahajan had been assured by the Indian leaders of military aid whenever he wanted it.

The Govt. of India desired Sheikh Abdullah's release and his association with the State administration. Intensive efforts

for a compromise between Hari Singh and Sheikh Abdullah, who was lodged in Bhaderwah jail, were also going on. Intermediaries were shuttling between Bhaderwah, Srinagar and Delhi. These efforts prompted Sheikh Abdullah to write a letter from jail to Hari Singh on 26th September '47 in which he swore his loyalty to the Maharaja and the royal family. For entirely selfish reasons, he forgot the enormous sacrifices of people in their fight against the Maharaja's misrule. Contrast this servile attitude of Sheikh Abdullah with his brave words spoken within and outside the trial court in May 1946, challenging Hari Singh's moral right to rule Kashmir. Sheikh Abdullah's tactics were dictated by his irresistible desire to get the prime minister's job. On receipt of Sheikh Abdullah's letter of total loyalty to him, Hari Singh held parleys with him through emissaries. Hari Singh insisted that Sheikh Abdullah should revoke formally his Quit Kashmir movement and reiterate his loyalty to the Maharaja, before he could be released from jail. Sheikh Abdullah surrendered to Hari Singh unconditionally and was therefore released on 29th September '47 to help the Indian conspiracy with regard to accession.

On the very day of his release, Sheikh Abdullah addressed a public meeting at Hazuri Bagh. The whole city including the venue of the meeting was reverberating with slogans of *Pakistan Zindabad* and *Sheri-Kashmir Zindabad*. People in their multitudes wanted Sheikh Abdullah to declare his support for accession to Pakistan. Instead, he opposed the Muslim League and the two-nation theory and praised the Congress and Nehru. He, however, did not commit himself explicitly on the question of accession because his views were obviously at variance with those of his listeners. For the next three weeks, deputation after deputation of Muslims from all walks of life, from all over the State begged of him to support Kashmir's accession to Pakistan. In reply, Sheikh Abdullah was evasive. D. N. Kachru, a functionary of All India State Peoples Conference writes to Nehru from Srinagar on 4th October '47: "Sheikh and his colleagues want to accede to India but would not like to publicise their views yet. They are creating a proper climate for the

announcement. They are portraying the Muslim League and Jinnah as anti-Kashmiri. Sheikh Abdullah wants power to be transferred to the National Conference". Sheikh Abdullah met Hari Singh at Srinagar on 15th October'47 and expressed his opposition to the independence formula. According to M. C. Mahajan, then prime minister of Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah demanded the office of prime minister for himself and assured Hari Singh that his interests would not be harmed by the National Conference. In a public meeting at Hazratbal on 19th October'47, Sheikh Abdullah launched a frontal attack on Jinnah but refused to take his audience into confidence regarding the accession conspiracy that was being hatched with his active collaboration.

Around mid-October'47, three leaders from Pakistan, namely, Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din, Dr. M.D. Taseer and Malik Taj-ud-Din held extensive talks with Sheikh Abdullah at Srinagar. They persuaded him to support Kashmir's accession to Pakistan. Sheikh Abdullah feared that hostility of the Muslim League leadership might be inimical to his political interests in case of Kashmir's accession to Pakistan. He is also believed to have insisted, in his talks with the Pakistani delegation, on full internal autonomy for the State. He agreed to continue parleys with the Pakistani leaders at Karachi. The prime minister of India very shrewdly discarded considerations of protocol and personally received Sheikh Abdullah at the Delhi airport, when the latter visited the Indian capital after his meeting with the Pakistani delegation at Srinagar. As an extraordinary gesture, he was presented with a guard of honour at the Delhi airport. He stayed in the prime ministerial residence at Delhi as Nehru's guest. Sheikh Abdullah, along with his wife and five children, sought refuge in Delhi in the wake of popular uprising in support of Kashmir's accession to Pakistan.

In the meantime, the Govt. of Pakistan sent an inept bureaucrat, Major Shah to persuade the Maharaja to accede to Pakistan. The mission was a total failure. Sheikh Abdullah sent G. M. Sadiq to Pakistan ostensibly to continue the dialogue on the acces-

sion issue with the Pakistani leaders. No fruitful results came out of this dialogue. Sadiq on hearing of the tribesmen's entry into Kashmir on 22nd October '47 left Lahore for Delhi.

While the overall political situation in the State was extremely tense owing to Hari Singh's prevarication on the accession issue, his administration persisted in tyrannising the people. In early August '47, a civil disobedience movement and a no-tax campaign began in some parts of the Poonch district. Martial law was imposed there and a reign of terror let loose. There were meetings and demonstrations in favour of Kashmir joining Pakistan. Whole villages were burnt down by the Dogra soldiers and innocent civilian blood was spilled over in indiscriminate firing. In the second World War, more than 70,000 men were directly recruited from the state to fight for the Allies, of whom 60,000 were Muslims, mostly of the Sudhan tribe from the Poonch region. No sane man would expect these heroic exservicemen of Poonch, who had fought gallantly against the German and Japanese forces in Africa, Europe, Burma and Indonesia, to be silent spectators to Dogra perpetration of plunder, arson and rape on their own soil. Inevitably, people of the Poonch district raised the banner of armed rebellion against the repressive Dogra regime in August '47 - weeks before the tribesmen entered Kashmir. The brave sons of Poonch waged a heroic battle, shed their blood and put the Maharaja's forces to flight. The armed rebellion proved infectious and trouble against Hari Singh soon erupted in Mirpur also.

In anticipation of partition of India, the people of Punjab were gripped by extreme communal frenzy. Riots broke out on a massive scale in Punjab in March 1947. Apart from half a million people killed in these senseless riots, millions were rendered homeless. Consequently, thousands of Hindu and Sikh refugees from western Punjab entered the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Most of them settled in the Jammu province. Their entry into the State was siezed as an alibi by the rabid communalists of Jammu to plan and execute the policy of mass killings of Muslims. It all

started in Mirpur on 19th October'47 where the Maharaja's forces resorted to indiscriminate killing of innocent Muslims. Anti-Muslim frenzy spread like wild fire throughout the Jammu region. On 23rd October'47, Udhampur witnessed a carnage. The anti-Muslim frenzy spread rapidly to Batote, Ramnagar, Kishtwar and Reasi. A sizeable number of Muslims from the Jammu province migrated to Pakistan in the wake of partition. Muslims of Samba and Kathua became victims of large scale massacre, loot and arson. It is well known that thousands of Muslim women were abducted in the Jammu province. The brunt of communal savagery was borne by the Muslims of Jammu city. Initially, they were butchered, looted and raped by the Dogra forces and the local ruffians.

The Maharaja's Government procured 70 trucks on 5th & 6th November'47 and promised to send Jammu Muslims to Pakistan. It must be recorded in perpetual condemnation of Hari Singh that this was only a trap. Innocent men, women and children in their thousands were murdered in cold blood near Samba. Hari Singh and his prime minister, Mahajan must make Hitler uneasy in his grave. It is estimated that 20 to 30 thousand civilian Muslims were killed by the Dogra forces in Jammu province in the wake of partition of India.

The State of Jammu and Kashmir presented a grim scenario in October 1947. The Maharaja's forces committed excesses, particularly in Poonch and Mirpur; abetted massacre of innocent Muslims in Jammu region; encouraged widespread loot and plunder. These grave developments naturally provoked the traditionally armed tribesmen of the N.W.F.P. to come to the rescue of their co-religionists in Kashmir. People in Pakistan also apprehended India's plan to forcibly occupy Kashmir in collaboration with Sheikh Abdullah.

Five thousand tribesmen, under the leadership of Khurshid Anwar, a retired Major in the British Indian army entered Kashmir on 22nd October'47. Without encountering much resistance from the Dogra forces, the tribesmen captured Muzaffarabad. The Dogra forces were demoralised owing to the hostile

attitude of the local population and the unexpected attack by the tribesmen. Brigadier Rajendra Singh, the chief of staff of the 13,000-strong Dogra army, was killed by the tribesmen on 25th October. 1850 officers and men stationed in the Badami Bagh Cantonment neither came forward to fight nor made their presence known as a fighting force, until weeks after the arrival of Indian forces. Baramulla fell to tribesmen on 26th October. The entire population of the town and its surrounding areas was excited and jubilant.

While the main column of tribesmen was still at Uri, 100 kilometres from Srinagar, Hari Singh hurriedly packed up at Srinagar and in the cover of darkness, on the night falling between 25th & 26th October 1947, fled to Jammu. Here is a ruler who flees for fear of his life from the wrath of people, losing all control over the State. It is absolutely perverse to regard his signature, while fleeing, as tantamount to the State's accession to India. If the tribesmen were raiders, then Hari Singh surely should not have abandoned 'his people'. It is readily conceded that some tribesmen committed excesses against the civilian population in Muzaffarabad and Baramulla but it was blown out of proportion by the government propagandists and the National Conference activists. Sheikh Abdullah resorted to a campaign of vilification against the tribesmen with a view to hoodwinking the public opinion and to concoct a plausible justification for his support of the state's accession to India.

The British officers of the Pakistan army were keeping their counterparts in Delhi fully informed about the campaign of tribesmen in Kashmir. Mountbatten is believed to have secretly visited Lahore on 23rd October for consultations with the British officers of the Pakistan army. On 24th October, R.L. Batra, Kashmir's deputy prime minister informed the Govt. of India of the entry of tribesmen and their continuing advance towards Srinagar. V.P. Menon, the Indian secretary of states, alongwith senior officers of the army and airforce visited Srinagar on 25th October to study the military situation. Menon met Hari Singh alongwith Mahajan, the same day, at Srinagar. Prime minister Mahajan airdashed to Delhi

and requested the Government of India for immediate military assistance. Sheikh Abdullah who was in Delhi as Nehru's guest at the time, alongwith his family, made a similar request. In spite of the fact, that the Govt. of India had made all preparations for an armed intervention in Kashmir, they insisted on accession of Kashmir to India preceding military assistance. Consequently, Menon and Mahajan flew to Jammu and obtained the fugitive Maharaja's signature on the Instrument of Accession on 26th October 1947.

Alongwith the signed Instrument of Accession, Hari Singh, in utter panic and haste, sent a letter to Mountbatten, the governor-general of India which said: ".....I wanted to take time to decide to which dominion I should accede or whether it is not in the best interests of both the dominions and for my state to stay independent, of course with friendly and cordial relations with both....."

On return to Delhi, with the Instrument of Accession in his hands, V.P. Menon, waving it to the British High Commissioner in India, said: "Here it is! We have Kashmir. The bastard signed the Act of Accession. And now that we have got it, we will never let it go". (Freedom at Midnight Page 556). Mountbatten, accepting the Instrument of Accession on 27th October 1947, said in his letter to Hari Singh: "..... In consistence with their policy that in the case of any state where the issue of accession has been the subject of dispute, the question of accession should be decided in accordance with the wishes of the people of the state, it is my Government's wish that as soon as law and order have been restored in Kashmir, the question of the State's accession should be settled by a reference to the People". Assuming that the accession was legally valid, yet it was unmistakably provisional and temporary in nature, subject to ratification by the people.

The Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan was born on 27th October '47 when one hundred planes began airlifting the Indian troops, arms and ammunition from Delhi to Srinagar. In fact Mountbatten's preparations for an airlift of troops to Kashmir

had begun on 25th October, when he ordered all Indian civil air transport to drop their passengers wherever they were and head for Delhi. (Freedom at Midnight page 356). Thus it is clear that Kashmir was no less invaded by India than by the tribesmen of the N.W.F.P.

The first encounter between the tribesmen and the Indian forces occurred at Baramulla on 27th October. The Indian forces retreated. The tribesmen marched towards Srinagar and a pitched battle between the tribesmen and the Indian army was fought on 7th November '47 at Shalteng, about 8 kilometres from Srinagar. The tribesmen were defeated and this was the end of tribal effort at capturing Srinagar and its airport. The National Conference workers, particularly Maqbool Sherwani, misled the tribesmen and spread exaggerated rumours of their excesses. Some sympathisers of the Frontier Gandhi (Gaffar Khan), amongst the tribesmen, resorted to acts of loot and arson, thereby incurring the wrath of Kashmiris. Skirmishes and armed encounters between the tribesmen and the Indian forces on the Kashmir soil continued for nearly 14 months. The regular Pakistan army was sucked into Kashmir operations in April 1948.

When the news of the State's accession to India became known on the 26th October, Jinnah ordered his army chief to despatch the Pakistan army to Srinagar. The army chief, supported by the Pakistan Cabinet put up bureaucratic excuses and instead suggested to Jinnah that Mountbatten and Nehru be invited to Pakistan for an immediate conference to sort out the problem. Nehru put up the excuse of indisposition for not attending the conference. Mountbatten and Jinnah met in Lahore on 1st November '47. Jinnah proposed an immediate ceasefire, a neutral administration in Kashmir, followed by plebiscite. These proposals were rejected by the Indian cabinet. A meeting between the prime ministers of India and Pakistan, held in Delhi towards the end of November '47, also failed to resolve the problem.

A number of developments took place on the political and diplomatic fronts. The Pakistan prime minister lodged a

strong protest with the Kashmir Prime Minister, Mahajan in October'47, against the massacre of Muslims in the Jammu province. To allay fears in Pakistan regarding induction of the Indian troops into Kashmir, Nehru sent a telegram to his Pakistan counterpart on 27th october'47. "The question of accession in any disputed territory or state must be decided in accordance with wishes of people and we adhere to this view". In a second telegram dated 31st October'47 Nehru assures the Pakistan prime minister: "Withdrawal of Indian forces from Kashmir will take place after law and order is restored there. It is the people of Kashmir who will ultimately determine their future". In yet another telegram of 4th November'47, Nehru declares: "We have no desire to impose our will on Kashmir. We have agreed on an impartial international agency like the U.N. supervising any referendum". On 4th october, 1948 Nehru again reassures Pakistan in a telegram thus: "We have never resiled from our position that there should be a fair and impartial plebiscite soon after normal conditions return in Jammu and Kashmir".

The Pakistan prime minister in a telegram to the British premier, dated 24th November 1947, feared that repeated Indian assurances of a plebiscite in Kashmir were only to legitimise Indian occupation of Kashmir and to mislead the world opinion. In a nation-wide broadcast over All India Radio on 2nd November'47, Nehru reiterated India's stand that the accession issue of Kashmir would be settled according to peoples wishes ascertained under international auspices. In a historic public meeting held at Lal Chowk, Srinagar on 12th November'47, Nehru repeated the assurance that peoples verdict about their future would be final even if it goes against India. While the Indian leaders were reassuring Kashmiris and the international community about their commitment to plebiscite, Sheikh Abdullah told Choudhary Abbas in November 1947, in the Jammu jail, that plebiscite was out of the question (Atash-I-Chinar Page 450).

India lodged a complaint, against pakistan, with the U.N. Security Council on 1st January 1948, accusing Pakistan of

committing aggression against her. The Security Council urged both India and Pakistan to refrain from aggravating the situation. Both governments sent in their assurances but the fighting in Kashmir continued unabated. The Council met on 15th January '48 to consider the Indian complaint. Gopalaswamy Ayyengar, minister for transport in Nehru's cabinet led the Indian delegation while Zafrullah Khan, Pakistani foreign minister led his country's delegation. Ayyengar reaffirmed that the question of the State's accession would be settled by a reference to the people. Zafrullah Khan, through brilliant advocacy, denied the charge of aggression levelled against Pakistan. He accused India of committing genocide against its Muslim population and charged India with armed occupation of Junagarh, Mangrol and Manavadar despite the fact that these states had acceded to Pakistan. He also submitted that Kashmir's provisional and temporary accession to India was based on violence and fraud. Zafrullah Khan's masterly exposition of the case convinced the Security Council that the problem was not simply one of expelling the tribesmen from Kashmir as demanded by India but of solving the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the will of the people.

Sheikh Abdullah addressed the Security Council as an Indian delegate on 5th February 1948. The Indian delegation was embarrassed by his performance as his language was thunderous and grammar wonderful. Zafrullah Khan, amused by Sheikh Abdullah's performance, asked Ayyengar sarcastically, "where had you kept this jewel all these days".

The Security Council unambiguously recognised Kashmir's right of self-determination and laid down in a historic resolution, dated 21st April 1948, that the future of the State be decided through a fair and unfettered plebiscite. The Security Council appointed the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) with a view to facilitate the implementation of the plebiscite resolution. The UNCIP visited Delhi, Karachi, Muzaffarabad and Srinagar. The Kashmir government strained every nerve to prevent the commission from coming into contact with the masses.

Large scale arrests of men and women were made. Yet, people secretly approached individual members of the commission in shops, in streets and through letters, urging them to undo the wrongs, to stop terror and to ensure a free choice of their destiny. This commission passed a resolution on 13th August 1948, reiterating the earlier Security Council resolution of 21st April '48 with regard to plebiscite in Kashmir. Both India and Pakistan reaffirmed their commitment to plebiscite in the light of UNCIP resolution of 13th August '48. After holding 113 meetings in less than 6 months, the commission's final proposals were accepted by India and Pakistan and are enshrined in the UNCIP resolution of January 5, 1949. It provides for a plebiscite in Kashmir, immediate ceasefire between India and Pakistan and its supervision by the U.N. military observers and the appointment of a plebiscite administrator. Hostilities between India and Pakistan ceased on 1st January '49. A ceasefire line came into being which has ever since been monitored by the U.N. military observers. This event truncated Kashmir into two parts - the Indian Kashmir and the Pakistan Kashmir. The ceasefire line is an arbitrary and unnatural barrier as far as Kashmiris are concerned as it has not only cynically divided their homeland but families too. The ceasefire line was renamed as the Line of Control in 1972.

Differences between India and Pakistan arose, in 1949, about the interpretation of certain provisions of the UNCIP resolutions regarding demilitarisation and its timing. The commission proposed that the differences be referred to arbitration. President Truman of the USA and Premier Attlee of the UK addressed a joint appeal to the prime ministers of India & Pakistan for acceptance of the proposal. Pakistan agreed but India rejected the arbitration formula. Robert Menzies, the Australian prime minister also offered proposals in 1951 for demilitarisation in Kashmir but India rejected them.

Immediately after ceasefire, the U.N. Secretary General, with the prior approval of the two governments, nominated Admiral Nimitz as the Plebiscite Administrator. Owing to

Indian obduracy, Nimitz could not proceed with the job of arranging a plebiscite in Kashmir. He, however, continued to draw his salary as the Plebiscite Administrator until his death in 1971.

To get over India's prevarications in holding a plebiscite, the U.N. appointed an eminent Australian jurist, Owen Dixon as a mediator in April 1950. He offered various proposals to solve the tangle, including the one, that Jammu should go to India, Azad Kashmir to Pakistan and a U.N. supervised plebiscite be held in the Valley. India again paid no heed.

The Security Council adopted a resolution, on 13th March 1951, reaffirming its previous resolutions on Kashmir and declaring that any decision that the Kashmir constituent assembly may take about the future of the State, would not constitute a disposition of the state as laid down in the Council resolutions. Sir B.N. Rau, leader of the Indian delegation, assured the Council on 29.3.51 that, "the Kashmir constituent assembly will not bind my Government or prejudice the position of this council".

The Security Council relieved Owen Dixon as the mediator and instead appointed Frank Graham, an ex-American senator in his place, on 30th April '51. Nehru conveys to Graham India's commitment to plebiscite thus: "The Government of India not only reaffirm their acceptance of the principle that the question of accession of the State of Jammu and Kashmir to India shall be decided through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite under the auspices of the United Nations but are anxious that the conditons necessary for such a plebiscite should be created as quickly as possible". Frank Graham addressing the Security Council on 18th October '51 said: "The people of Kashmir are anxiously waiting for the opportunity to exercise their promised right of self-determination. The sovereignty which proceeds from the princes is subject to the sovereignty of the people, who after all, are the highest sovereignty. Any status based on compulsions of force by either nation or on the attrition of long delay in settlement would not be permanently accepted by the people of the State. Neither would a forced solution be

in accordance with the principles and the spirit of the U.N. nor would it have the support of the moral opinion of mankind". Graham exhorted India and Pakistan to settle the dispute in accordance with the pledge given by both the countries to the U.N. and to the people of Kashmir. The two governments failed to arrive at an agreement regarding the modalities of the proposed demilitarisation of the State. Graham's great mission was thus frustrated essentially by India's intransigence and the Security Council efforts to hold a plebiscite also came to an end in early 1953.

Frank Graham in his statement to the Security Council, on 17th January '52, made an impassioned appeal for a settlement and said: "..... The people of Jammu and Kashmir, through a free and impartial plebiscite, would signal through the darkness of these times, a ray of hope, that not by bullets but by ballots, not through conflict of armies but through cooperation of people, is the enduring way for people to determine their own destiny and way of life". The next U.N. mediator, Jarring's mission in 1957 also proved infructuous.

Pakistan, in early fifties, entered into a defence pact with the USA and also joined the US-sponsored military organisations like the SEATO and the Baghdad Pact. The Kashmir dispute returned to the Security Council in February '57. This was a watershed in the history of this dispute. The Soviet Union exercised its veto, for the first time, in regard to the council resolutions pertaining to plebiscite. Krishna Menon, a rootless Indian politician, pandering to the Indian people back home, converted his country's intransigence into arrogant repudiation of solemn international commitments and agreements. His perverse argument was that the plebiscite issue was dead because Pakistan had entered into military alliance with the USA! Nehru also publicly supported Menon's volte face. This change in India's attitude, in flagrant violation of its innumerable assurances, stunned the people of Kashmir and outraged the world conscience. It became crystal clear that India was hellbent on occupying Kashmir in disregard of the wishes of people and in repudiation of Security Council resolutions to which India is a party.

CHAPTER 13

INSIDE KASHMIR

Having obtained the fleeing Maharaja's signature on the Instrument of Accession on 26th October 1947, the Govt. of India was keen to associate Sheikh Abdullah with the civil administration of Jammu and Kashmir State. At Delhi's behest he was sworn in as Head of the Emergency Administration on 30th October, 47. Notwithstanding his crusade for 16 years against the despotic rule of Hari Singh, Sheikh Abdullah swore loyalty to Hari Singh and his descendants and heirs! The National Conference volunteers let loose a reign of terror against the people of the Valley who were opposed to accession, even though it was provisional in nature. The volunteers resorted to indiscriminate arrests, loot and rape throughout the Valley. They dubbed their victims as pro-Pakistan sympathisers and got away with vandalism with impunity. As a ruler, Sheikh Abdullah proved cruel and repressive. The State police also manifested naked fascist tendencies. Qadir Ganderbali, a notorious policeman of Kashmir, symbolised terror during Sheikh Abdullah's oppressive rule. He tortured people with hot irons, put hot potatoes in their mouths, inflicted wounds and rubbed salt into them and put chilly-stuffed sticks in their private parts.

Sheikh Abdullah settled personal scores with his political opponents. Ghulam Nabi Gilkar, a frontline freedom fighter was humiliated, arrested and subsequently evicted to Pakistan. When Gilkar died in Pakistan, after years of exile, Sheikh Abdullah in a condolence message accused Kashmiris of ingratitude to and betrayal of Gilkar! This is a classic example of Sheikh Abdul-

lah's shamelessness. Sheikh Abdullah's intolerance of dissent prompted him to physically push out from his office Molvi Abdullah, a father figure of the freedom movement; Iqbal Chapri, a freedom fighter and head of the Boatmen's Association was paraded through the streets of Srinagar as a mark of humiliation. Listening to Radio Pakistan was a big crime under Sheikh's dispensation. R.C. Kak, Prime Minister of Kashmir from June 1945 to August 47 was paraded through the streets with his arms tied behind him. His crime was that he was a votary of independent Kashmir and would not be a party to the fraudulent accession. It is ironical that Sheikh Abdullah should have condemned R.C.Kak for his patriotism.

Sheikh Abdullah's rule was marked by sky-rocketing prices, blackmarket and unfair profiteering by traders and scarcity of essential commodities. Even rice, green tea and salt became extremely scarce. While Sheikh was preaching secularism in Kashmir, he was almost indifferent to the barbarities inflicted on the Jammu Muslims, by Hari Singh and his Prime Minister Mahajan. His grouse against the Muslims of Jammu was that they had never accepted his leadership. In fact, he contrived to send the survivors of the Jammu massacre to Pakistan, including their leaders like Choudhary Abbas and A.R. Saghar. The National Conference arranged 22 tongas to carry some non-Muslim families from Srinagar to Jammu. All but one of these 22 Kashmiri tonga drivers were brutally killed by the Hindu rioters in Jammu.

The entry of the Indian Army into Kashmir was hailed by Sheikh Abdullah. The people of Kashmir were assured that the Army had come to defend their lives, honour and property. Within days of their landing in Srinagar, it was ironically the National Conference volunteers who became the first victims of excesses committed by the Army. Twelve peace brigade men were subjected to sodomy and then 11 of them were shot dead near Ram Bagh bridge (Shabnum Qayoom Vol. III page 22). The soldiers molested women on a large scale and killed a number of innocent Kashmiris. Villages surrounding the Srinagar airport and the village of Zainakot were burnt down by the soldiers. The people of Kashmir were incensed by the repulsive acts which become only an army of occupation. P.N. Bazaz, the famous freedom fighter of Kashmir testifies: "Some day

when the people of Kashmir attain freedom , an enquiry shall have to be made into the conduct of the Indian army while they remained in occupation of the State.... They resorted to acts of arson, rape, loot and murder. If undisciplined Muslim tribesmen are condemnable for what they did, the trained soldiers who were members of a regular army deserve harsher criticism" (Struggle for freedom in Kashmir, Page 337).

Pleased with Sheikh Abdullah's crackdown on the hapless people of Kashmir and also with his diatribes against Pakistan at the United Nations, Delhi manoeuvred his nomination to the office of Prime Minister of the State in March 1948. Maharaja Hari Singh was forced by the Government of India to abdicate in May 1949 in favour of his son Karan Singh who took over as the Regent.

By now, the Security Council in its historic resolutions of April 1948, August 1948 and January 49 had unanimously upheld the Kashmiris right of self determination and had categorically rejected the binding nature of the Instrument of Accession. Both Pakistan and India pledged to the people of Kashmir that an impartial plebiscite would be held under the U.N. auspices. To lend constitutional guarantee to the pledges made at the U.N., article 253 of the Indian Constitution was modified in its application to Kashmir to the effect that no decision affecting the disposition of the state of Jammu and Kashmir shall be made by the Government of India without the consent of the Government of the State. This Article, clearly, concedes the temporary and provisional nature of accession and the concept and promise of a plebiscite are implicit in it.

The Govt. of India, however, became nervous about the outcome of the promised plebiscite in Kashmir. Consequently, a chain of events unfolded in India, with a view to frustrating the U.N. resolutions and negating their own international commitments. The Indian Constitution incorporated article 370 to guarantee autonomy and special status to the state. Barring the three subjects of defence, foreign affairs and communications, the rest of the powers of governance vested in the State. This was clearly expressed in the

Govt. of India's Constitution order of 1950.

In 1951, Sheikh Abdullah's clique, encouraged by Delhi, decided to have a constituent assembly, for the State in order to rubber-stamp the Maharaja's Instrument of Accession. This development provoked widespread resentment in Kashmir, Pakistan and at the U.N. The Security Council adopted a resolution on 13th March, 1951 declaring that any decision that the Kashmir Constituent Assembly may take about the future of the State would not constitute a disposition of the State as laid down in the previous Council resolutions. Sir B.N. Rau, the leader of the Indian delegation, assured the Security Council on 29th March, 51: "The Kashmir Constituent Assembly's opinion on the issue of accession will not bind my Government or prejudice the position of this Council"

Elections to the Constituent Assembly, held in September 1951 were unprecedented in their infamy. Seventy three members of the assembly were 'elected' unopposed while the remaining two constituencies witnessed token elections. This was Kashmir's first tryst with democracy in the post-autocratic era. In fact no dictator could have improved upon this achievement of Sheikh Abdullah. The State Constituent Assembly abolished the hereditary rule of the Maharaja and instead provided for the elective office of Head of the State. Karan Singh was elected by the Constituent Assembly in November '52, as the first Head of the State. A separate flag for the State was adopted by the Assembly.

To nibble at the special status and autonomy of the State, Sheikh Abdullah's regime and the Govt. of India arrived at an agreement on 24th July 1952, christened as the Delhi Agreement. This agreement, inter alia, includes:- The Indian Citizenship Act was made applicable to the State, but the State Legislature was empowered to regulate the rights and privileges of permanent residents especially in regard to acquisition of immovable property and appointment to services. The Indian President was empowered to declare a State of Emergency in case of external danger but in case of internal disturbance, the power could be exercised only at the request,

or with the concurrence, of the State Government. The jurisdiction of Supreme Court of India was extended in certain matters. This agreement was ratified by the State Constituent Assembly in May 1954. It signified dilution of autonomy. The constitution order of 1954 was issued by the President of India in supersession of the 1950 order and applied to the State all those legislative powers and other provisions of the Constitution of India which corresponded not only to matters specified in the Instrument of Accession, but also to matters covered by the Delhi Agreement of 1952. This marked the beginning of erosion of autonomy. The Delhi Agreement clearly subverted the principle of plebiscite and reduced Kashmir to the position of an internal problem of India. All India Services were extended to the State of Jammu and Kashmir in 1958. From 1964 onwards, a host of presidential orders followed resulting in erosion of autonomy at a galloping pace. The Union of India can now practically legislate for Kashmir in any sphere. The nomenclature of Head of the State was changed to Governor and of the Prime Minister to Chief Minister. Jurisdiction of India's Election Commission, Auditor and Comptroller General and the Supreme Court are fully extended to the State now. The final blow dealt to Kashmir's autonomy came in 1983 when the Chief Justice of the State High Court, Mufti Baha-ud-din Farooqi, was transferred by the Government of India to Sikkim without seeking the constitutionally stipulated concurrence of the State Government. Not only did the Govt. of India trample upon the State's judicial autonomy but it openly interfered in the dispensation of justice in the State. Justice Farooqi, has publicly charged the Govt. of India that his delayed confirmation as the State's Chief Justice and his subsequent transfer to Sikkim was the story of reprisals against him for his refusal to allow interference in the normal course of justice. Justice Farooqi, disgusted at the unconstitutional attitude of the Government of India sought voluntary retirement in 1983.

In the wake of Delhi Agreement, a Hindu chauvinist agitation was launched in the Jammu province, opposing special

status and autonomy of the State. The agitators clamoured for complete merger of the State with the Union of India. They violently protested against the concept of two Heads of the State, two Prime Ministers, two flags and two constitutions. This agitation was openly abetted by Delhi with a view to cutting Sheikh Abdullah to size. Delhi was feeling uneasy at Sheikh's lack of enthusiasm in getting the Instrument of Accession rubber-stamped by the State Constituent Assembly. Provoked by the communally-inspired Jammu agitation, Sheikh Abdullah lambasted Delhi for pursuing anti-Muslim policies and overlooking claims of Muslims in the matter of government employment. He also accused the Government of India of unconstitutional interference in the affairs of the State. The National Conference was once again seized with various alternatives about the future status of the State, including plebiscite, independence and autonomy. Sheikh Abdullah did some loud thinking about independent Kashmir, in his meetings with the American ambassador in India, and with Adlai Stevenson, a leading American Democrat and also with a number of foreign journalists. By now, Sheikh Abdullah had outlived his utility in promoting Indian interests and in fact became a liability to Delhi. A conspiracy was hatched, by the Government of India in collaboration with his colleagues, to remove him from the political scene. He was dismissed as Prime Minister and arrested on 9th August 1953. His deputy, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad was installed in his place. This led to widespread disturbances, arrests and killings. More than 2,000 people are believed to have been killed in the wake of Sheikh Abdullah's arrest. The rioters demanded withdrawal of the Indian troops from Kashmir and the holding of a plebiscite. Sheikh Abdullah once again symbolised peoples resistance against occupation and tyranny.

To reconcile their different interpretations of the U.N. resolutions on Kashmir, the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan, Nehru and Bogra, held discussions in London in June '53, and continued the discussions in Karachi in the last week of July '53.

The timings of these talks synchronised with the brewing conspiracy of Sheikh's dismissal. To thwart Pakistan's efforts to raise the Kashmir issue at the United Nations, Bogra was invited to Delhi on 16th August '53 to continue the Kashmir parleys. The joint communique issued by Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan, *inter alia* said: "It was their firm opinion that Kashmir should be settled in accordance with the wishes of the people of that State. The most feasible method of ascertaining the wishes of the people was by a fair and impartial plebiscite....The next step would be the appointment of a Plebiscite Administrator by the end of April, 1954". Consequent on the summit meeting of the two countries in August '53, India refused to implement the demilitarization provision in Kashmir owing to Pakistan's defence treaty with the USA!

Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad's 10-year-old rule was marked by unprecedented corruption, nepotism and repression. Kashmir was the name of a vast prison in Bakshi regime. His achievements, however, included subsidy on food grains, marked building activity, establishment of a University, Medical College and Regional Engineering College. Rapid strides were made in the sphere of education which was made free from primary school to the university level. Employment opportunities received a great fillip in Bakshi's time. It was during his rule that the Instrument of Accession was ratified by the so-called Constituent Assembly in 1956. Elections to the legislature held in 1957 and '62 were massively rigged by the Bakshi regime.

Soon after the entry of the Indian army into Kashmir, underground and overground activities were organised to offer resistance against the new fetters. The freedom fighters managed to obtain guns and explosives from across the cease-fire line. Scores of people were arrested and stringent punishments awarded. Mohammad Shafi Qureshi, and M.Y. Qureshi organised pro-Pakistan activities and openly advocated accession to Pakistan. M.Y. Qureshi was pushed across the cease-fire line, whereas M.S. Qureshi, has since become a Congressman and once held a ministerial job in

Delhi. Currently he is the governor of the Indian state of Bihar. M.D. Karra, the hero of the Quit Kashmir Movement of 1946, floated the Kashmir Political Conference in June 1953 and openly advocated accession to Pakistan. He was soon arrested.

After his release from prison, Afzal Beg, a close lieutenant of Sheikh Abdullah, established the Plebiscite Front in 1955, providing a forum to the pro-Pakistan political activists and the followers of Sheikh Abdullah. The Valley once again witnessed a mass upsurge against India and a non-violent movement for accession to Pakistan. Afzal Beg made a speech, in the Constituent Assembly in 1954, exposing Indian betrayal of Kashmir and also Nehru's repudiation of international commitments in regard to a plebiscite in Kashmir. He also spoke bitterly of the reign of terror unleashed in the State.

Sheikh Abdullah was released in January '58 after more than 4 years of detention without trial. He asserted Kashmiris' right to self-determination and refused to subscribe to the view that Kashmir was an integral part of India. He declared that the issue of accession could not be decided by Indian rhetoric or by guns and bullets. He was subjected to political persecution and was rearrested in April '58.

In May '58 a conspiracy case was instituted against 25 persons, including Sheikh Abdullah. It was alleged that the accused were planning to violently overthrow the State Government and conspiring to annex the State with Pakistan. During the court proceedings, Sheikh Abdullah reiterated that Kashmir was an international issue and it had to be settled in accordance with the freely expressed wishes of the people concerned. After the passage of nearly 6 years, when more than Rs. 3 crores had been spent on prosecution, the Government withdrew the conspiracy case. The whole exercise was a perversion of justice for political ends.

Sino-Indian war broke out in 1962. Nehru felt compelled to seek good neighbourly relations with Pakistan. India's conciliatory attitude was also dictated by the possibility of an attack

from Pakistan. In view of the Chinese menace, the USA and the U.K. also desired an Indo-Pak rapprochement. India and Pakistan issued a joint communique in 1962: "The President of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of India have agreed that a renewed effort should be made to resolve the outstanding differences between their countries on Kashmir". Ministerial level talks were proposed initially followed by a possible summit. Between December '62 and May '63, five rounds of talks were held between Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Swaran Singh to find an amicable solution to Kashmir. The talks proved infructuous and naturally no summit meeting took place. Meanwhile, in December '62, Pakistan and China reached an agreement, in principle, in regard to the alignment of the common border of China's Sinkiang province and the northern areas of the Jammu and Kashmir State under Pakistan control. The boundary protocol signed in March '65 by the foreign ministers of China and Pakistan stipulates that the final ratification of the agreement shall take place when the Jammu and Kashmir issue is definitively settled. The two countries clearly underlined the disputed nature of the territory of Jammu and Kashmir State.

Kashmir was plunged into an unprecedented situation owing to the theft of the Holy Relic from the Hazratbal Shrine on 27th December 1963. The news of the theft spread like wild fire throughout the Valley. Millions of people turned out on the roads, protesting against the theft, demanding its immediate restoration and asked the authorities to punish the guilty. Life was paralysed for weeks on end with protest marches and complete hartal. The Government of India was shaken by the events in Kashmir. Mullik, the Indian Intelligence chief records, that Nehru was distressed by the events and wanted to be kept informed 3 or 4 times a day about the developments in Kashmir. Nehru underscored the fact that unless the Holy Relic was recovered, India's position in Kashmir would be seriously jeopardised (Page 124, My years with Nehru - B. N. Mullik).

To channelise peoples anger, against the unfortunate episode of the theft of the Holy Relic, an Action Committee

came into being with Molvi Farooq as its head. The Molvi had been installed, by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, as the Mirwaiz of Kashmir a couple of years back. Since the Government of the State was conspicuous by its non-existence, it was the Action Committee that literally ruled Kashmir during these fateful days. People increasingly became indignant against the Government of India. From the 30th of December the movement for restoration of the Relic assumed political overtones too. New demands were made, including the release of Sheikh Abdullah and holding of the promised plebiscite. The Holy Relic was surreptitiously restored in the Hazratbal Shrine on the 4th of January 1964. No details were furnished about the identity of people who had taken the Relic, the place where it was recovered from, nor were the guilty prosecuted. This policy was clearly a negation of Nehru's public assurances that the guilty would be brought to book. The entire episode of theft of the Holy Relic remains an enigma shrouded in deep mystery to this day.

Violent clashes occurred, on 25th January '64, between the processionists demanding identification of the Relic, and the Security forces resulting in at least 7 deaths.

Mullik records his meeting with Nehru on 9th February '64: "From the spectacle that I (Mullik) had seen from 31st December 1963 to 4th January '64, it had seemed to me that Kashmir was not a part of India. So, a new look had to be taken at Kashmir and our Kashmir policy required a new orientation. Pandit Nehru said he was also thinking on those lines and he was convinced that a rethinking was essential" (Page 164 - Mullik).

Consequent on the changed perspective in Delhi, Sheikh Abdullah was released in April '64 after withdrawal of the conspiracy case against him. He was greeted, as usual, by thronging Kashmiri crowds, chanting- "We want plebiscite". Sheikh Abdullah had several meetings with Nehru and with his blessings visited Pakistan in May '64. During his talks with President Ayub Khan of Pakistan, Sheikh Abdullah mooted the idea of a confederation between India, Pakistan and Kashmir. Ayub Khan rejected the

suggestion by saying that Pakistan was seeking the salvation of Kashmiris and not their own enslavement which he thought the confederation formula implied (Page 128, Friends not Masters). During his stay in Pakistan, Sheikh Abdullah announced that Ayub Khan and Nehru would meet in Delhi in the month of June 64 to find an acceptable solution to Kashmir. Owing to Nehru's death on the 27th May '64, the flicker of hope kindled by the proposed meeting was extinguished.

Sheikh Abdullah left for Haj and a limited foreign tour in February 1965. In his passport application he described his nationality as Kashmiri, which provoked harsh reactions in India. He met President Nasser of Egypt and apprised him of the freedom struggle in Kashmir. The Egyptian press hailed him as the 'leader of the Liberation Movement in Kashmir'. After touring England and France, he arrived in Algiers where he met President Ben Bella, the great leader of the Algerian revolution. He also met Chou-en-Lai, the Chinese Premier, at Algiers who reiterated Chinese support for Kashmiris right of self-determination. King Faisal of Saudi Arabia extended his country's full support to Kashmiris in their struggle for freedom. The Government of India took serious exception to Sheikh Abdullah's activities abroad. He was arrested, on his return, at the Delhi airport on 8th May '65 and exiled to Otacamund in South India, nearly 2000 kilometres away from Kashmir. This provoked spontaneous protest demonstrations in Kashmir resulting in the death of 40 people and injuries to at least 300 people. The agitators persistently demanded plebiscite in Kashmir.

Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad's resignation as Prime Minister of Kashmir in October '63 brought in a political non-entity, Shams-ud-Din, in his place who had a brief innings of about 4 months. Shams-ud-Din was replaced by G.M. Sadiq as the Prime Minister in Feb '64. Sadiq Government was the first liberal regime since the National Conference grabbed power in 1947. Sadiq was instrumental in releasing Sheikh Abdullah from prison in April, 1964 and he restored substantially the basic human rights in Kashmir. His rule

also witnessed the virtual disappearance of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad's uniformed thugs known as the 'peace brigade'. Personally a clean and honest man, Sadiq's position was, however, abused for personal gains by his close relations and hangers-on. Sadiq's dubious achievement was conversion of the National Conference into the State unit of the Indian National Congress. Exigencies of power politics got the better of Sadiq's principles resulting in disfigurement of the State Constitution and erosion of autonomy enjoyed by the State. His regime witnessed massive erosion of the special status of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. These developments brought together, Sheikh Abdullah and Molvi Farooq, who pledged to work together to seek the right of self-determination for the people of Kashmir. Molvi Farooq founded a political party, called Awami Action Committee, in March '64. The National Conference advocated social boycott of Congressmen. The people of Kashmir responded enthusiastically to the boycott call and carried the campaign against congressmen to limits of absurdity.

The Plebiscite Front held a convention under the chairmanship of Munshi Mohammad Ishaq in July '65 and resolved that the only acceptable and durable solution to Kashmir is a plebiscite.

Meanwhile, having exhausted all peaceful avenues to seek a settlement of Kashmir, Pakistan chose to send armed infiltrators into Kashmir. The infiltrators entered the State via Gulmarg, Teetwal, Rajouri and Kargil. In consultation with the local leaders, particularly of the Plebiscite Front and Awami Action Committee, it had been decided that the armed infiltrators would attack strategic positions in the Valley. The date chosen for surprise attack was 13th July '65. Owing to non-cooperation, dictated by political expediency of the local leaders like Molvi Farooq, Molvi Masoodi and Mohi-ud-Din Karra, the plan proved abortive (Shabnum Qayoom Page 204 Vol. IV). By this time, the local regime and the Government of India were in full knowledge of the whole operation. Skirmishes and encounters between the infiltrators and the Indian

forces did occur at a number of places in the Valley. Batmaloo locality was burnt down by the Indian army rendering thousands of people homeless. A few infiltrators were arrested but the majority of them returned to Pakistan. A reign of terror against the people was let loose by the local authorities.

A full-fledged war broke out between India and Pakistan in September '65, lasting for 17 days. No military solution of Kashmir resulted from this war. The Security Council stepped in. In spite of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's speech, regarded as the best ever delivered at the U.N., the Security Council passed a resolution asking merely for a cease fire. The Soviet Union, assuming the role of a mediator, invited India and Pakistan to a summit conference at Tashkent in January 1966 in order to sort out their mutual differences. In spite of Soviet Prime Minister, Kosygin's best efforts, no solution could be found to the Kashmir problem, thanks to India's intransigence.

The Holy Relic episode of 1963-64 convinced the youth of Kashmir that Delhi's record in regard to Kashmir was one of broken pledges and unfulfilled promises. Students of the local University and the Engineering College, alongwith other young men and women organised a political forum called the Students and Youth League. Its objective was to win the right of self-determination for Kashmir as enshrined in the various Security Council resolutions. The League members resorted to demonstrations and protests at the local U.N. military observers office. Its prominent members included A.R. Kabli, Anwar Ashai, Mohammad Javeed, Ihsan-ul-Huq, Ghulam Mohammad Sheikh and A.R. Shaheen. The youth movement gained widespread support and popularity. The authorities imposed a crackdown in October, 1965 and arrested hundreds of students. Besides the prominent members of the Students and Youth League named above, other youth jailed included Mian Sarwar, A.R. Wani, Ejaz Rasul, Bashir Kitchlu, Mohammad Ashraf, M. A. Malik, Salim Anwar and Iqbal Shahmiri. These boys were sent to interrogation centres and were subjected to torture. The Srinagar

city looked like an entrenched camp and at every crossing there stood soldiers and regular police force. The students described the situation in Kashmir 'as worse than in a Nazi Concentration Camp'.

When the boys were in the bandwagon of the freedom struggle, the girls were not far behind. They boycotted classes in the educational institutions, paraded in the streets, chanting slogans like "We want plebiscite". The situation remained fluid for months on end and the discontent remained unmitigated. On 3rd October '67, the police opened fire on demonstrating students killing 6 people on the spot. On 7th October '67 the CRPF resorted to unprovoked firing during the course of a football match at the Stadium in Srinagar, killing half a dozen spectators. The Economist, London commented on 28.10.67, "Kashmir looks like an occupied territory".

While the brutal crackdown on the Muslim youth was an ongoing affair, a memorandum was handed over at Srinagar to the Indian Home Minister, Y.B. Chavan, in 1967. It disclosed that of the 2252 gazetted posts in the State, Muslims held 924 posts only despite their population percentage being 68.

It was also complained that in the Central Services like the offices of Accountant General, Post and Telegraph Department, Indian Airlines, the Income Tax Department, Central Excise and the banks, Muslims were conspicuous by their absence. Violent demonstrations continued unabated in Srinagar and the students and youth persisted in demanding a U.N. supervised plebiscite. Srinagar became a city of posters and slogans. The explosive situation was summed up by the Times of India (10th July, 1970).

"The danger in Kashmir today is not so much from outside as from within. This was highlighted by the arrest of 16 pro-pak extremists and 21 Naxalites in the state recently".

In January '71, more than 300 political workers, mostly youth, were arrested in the Valley on charges of sabotage. This was the famous "Al Fatah" case. The headquarters of the "Al

Fatah" group, situated at Barsu, 20 kilometres from Srinagar was alleged to be directing acts of sabotage within the Valley. The Government claimed to have unearthed considerable amount of arms and ammunition at the headquarters. Ghulam Rasool Zahgeer was named as the kingpin of this organisation. The youth spearheading the freedom movement were implicated in dacoity cases so as to justify their incarceration and still worse to give the youth and their movement a bad name.

The year 1971 saw the dismemberment of Pakistan, and the creation of Bangladesh. This was followed by an Indo-Pak summit at Simla in 1972. The Simla Agreement signed by Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan in July 1972 expressed the two countries resolve to settle the Kashmir issue bilaterally, through peaceful means. But regrettably, no tangible progress has been made towards a solution until now.

Sheikh Abdullah's exile order was revoked in 1970 and he triumphantly entered the State after a forced absence of nearly 5 years. Ostensibly to deliberate on the future of Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah convened a conference of prominent politicians in Srinagar. J.P. Narayan, an eminent Indian and a veteran freedom fighter also participated. Sensing correctly that Sheikh Abdullah was looking for an opportunity to ditch the freedom struggle, Munshi Mohammad Ishaq, a sincere and dedicated freedom fighter, publicly exposed the former's infidelity to the cause of plebiscite. True to his record of brazenness, Sheikh Abdullah accused Munshi Ishaq, in turn, of being insincere to the cause of Kashmir's self-determination. It did not take long even for the gullible, to realise as to who was bluffing.

Following Sadiq's death in 1971, Mir Qasim was imposed by Delhi as the State Chief Minister. Like the previous elections to the State legislature held in 1951, '57 and '62, the elections held in '67 and '72 were equally and blatantly rigged. Mir Qasim's achievements were only personal aggrandisement and nepotism. His attitude towards Delhi was one of abject servility. He turned a blind

eye to the genuine problems faced by the people.

The creation of Bangladesh demoralised Sheikh Abdullah. He erroneously concluded that India, being a powerful country, was too big to be resisted. Lamentably, he paid no heed to inexorable lessons of history which teach us that no power, however great, can succeed in depriving a nation of its freedom. Sheikh Abdullah's attitude changed radically in regard to the question of accession. He started negotiations with Delhi on the basis of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution guaranteeing internal autonomy to the State. He considered the factum of accession as settled and confined the parleys, with the Government of India, to the quantum of accession. Sheikh's ambivalence on the accession issue provoked angry reactions from the people. As a tactical move he publicly assured the people that whatever decisions are arrived at in his talks with Delhi, the people would have the final say. It was the youth again who led the mass protests against the changed stance of the Plebiscite Front. Peoples League formally launched in October 1974 under the leadership of Fazl Qureshi, spearheaded the resistance movement. The Peoples League received willing cooperation from the Students and Youth League, Youngmen's League, Islamic Students Organisation and the 'Al Fatah' group. They all vowed to continue the struggle for freedom and self-determination. The prominent youth leaders engaged in the struggle against Indira-Sheikh confabulations included Farooq Rahmani, Shabir Shah, Azam Inqilabi, Maqbool Bhat, Tajamul Islam, Shakil Bakshi and Mohammad Fazl. In July '74, Molvi Farooq led a mammoth procession against the proposed Sheikh-Indira Accord aimed at subversion of the freedom movement. Sheikh Abdullah was desperately aiming to return to power in disregard of his commitments to people and in spite of peoples anger, against his surrender of national self-respect. Sheikh Abdullah's eagerness for power produced the infamous Sheikh-Indira Accord of February 1975. It was rightly commented at the time that a lady had tamed the toothless Lion of Kashmir. The only achievement of Sheikh's political vagrancy of 22

years was to occupy Mir Qasim's rickety chief ministerial chair. Thus Sheikh bartered away his struggle for freedom for crumbs of power. The National Conference was revived after an indecent burial of the Plebiscite Front. The Accord caused widespread disturbances in the Valley. Ghulam Mohammad Bhillal of Sopore, arrested during the agitation, was tortured in prison resulting in his death on 15th February 1975. The Pakistan Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto gave a call for hartal on 28th February to protest against the Accord. The hartal was total and telling.

Maqbool Bhat who had been sentenced to death in 1968 on an alleged murder charge had fled to Pakistan after escaping from the Srinagar Central Jail. He re-entered Kashmir in 1975 and was rearrested. He had founded the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front. He was hanged to death in Tihar Jail, Delhi on 11th February 1984 and has since become a great martyr of the freedom movement.

Sheikh Abdullah's second innings in power was marked by repression and rapacity. He gagged the press and invoked the provisions of the notorious Public Safety Act in 1977 to silence dissent. Fundamental rights of people were curtailed. During his 7 years rule nearly 2000 people were jailed and 130 people killed for voicing anti-Government views. The youth leaders, Farooq Rahmani, Shabir Shah and Azam Inqilabi were also jailed. Food subsidies, introduced in the post-1953 era to help the indigent sections of population, were withdrawn. Instead, subsidies were offered to well-off sections in the hotel industry and horticulture. The historic Jamia Masjid of Srinagar was desecrated by the National Conference workers in 1978. The architecturally beautiful portals of the Masjid were smashed. A.R. Kabli, then a vociferous anti-Sheikh youthful politician was shot at and seriously wounded in 1980.

Elections to the State Legislature were held in July '77. Technically, these elections were, for once, substantially fair. The National Conference campaigned overtly to protect and promote the State's autonomy guaranteed by Article 370 of the

Indian Constitution. Needless to mention that this article has been considerably watered down since the early sixties and retains now an emotive appeal only. Apart from public rhetoric of preserving the individuality of the Kashmiri nation, the National Conference leadership cajoled people by talking about the opening of the Rawalpindi road. They publicly displayed green handkerchieves and rock salt. This symbolism was an allusion to their pro-Pak leanings. The trick worked. The National Conference won the elections hands down. Morally, however, the vote for the National Conference was in essence an anti-India vote.

On 26th July 1980, members of the security forces resorted to unprovoked vandalism in the Lal Chowk area of Srinagar. People were shot at, and mercilessly beaten and shops were looted. This provoked a complete hartal on 27th July. Anti-Sheikh and anti-India slogans were raised. A commission of inquiry was set up to look into the causes of unwarranted assault on innocent people. The report of the commission has still not been made public.

Sheikh's corruption, maladministration and nepotism broke all the inglorious records set previously. Political dishonesty was also in full blaze. In spite of his commitment to revoke the post-1953 laws inimical to the State's autonomy, Sheikh Abdullah did not move his little finger even in the promised direction. On the contrary, he proclaimed that Article 370, which linked autonomy with accession, was not sacrosanct. This statement caused public anger and was resented by the Awami Action Committee, Peoples Conference, Jamaat-i-Islami, Peoples League and the Students and Youth League. Having ostensibly fought against the Maharaja's autocratic and dynastic rule, Sheikh Abdullah himself promoted dynastic succession by nominating his son, Farooq Abdullah, as his political heir, in 1981.

Sheikh Abdullah died on 8th September 1982 and received a state funeral, attended by multitudes of people including leading Indian politicians.

Sheikh's autobiography was released by his family

posthumously. It is alleged that some portions of the original manuscript are missing in the published text. The missing pages are believed to contain Sheikh's admission of his political blunders (Shabnum Qayoom Vol. V Page 269). Prior to his death, Sheikh Abdullah wrote a letter of apology to R.C. Kak, Maharaja's Prime Minister (1945-1947) begging forgiveness for the humiliation to which Kak had been subjected by the National Conference after its assumption of power. R.C. Kak in an interview with S. Qayoom in 1982 lamented that Sheikh Abdullah in 1947 had converted Kashmir's potential independence into real servitude (Shabnum Qayoom Vol. V Page: 272). Thus Sheikh Abdullah left the political stage of Kashmir after 51 traumatic years. Here is a man who received, more than anybody else in Kashmir's recorded history, unstinted love and affection of his people, bordering on worship, and yet he betrayed them cynically for his personal aggrandisement.

Following his father's death, Farooq Abdullah was imposed by Delhi as the State Chief Minister. He 'won' the massively rigged elections in 1983. His administration was lacklustre and he himself was a pleasure-seeker.

A peaceful demonstration in Srinagar protesting against the carnage at Amritsar in the operation Blue Star in June '84 was greeted with bullets resulting in the death of 9 people. Farooq Government, similarly gunned down 6 people in June '88 demanding reconsideration of the hike in electricity charges.

Farooq Abdullah was overthrown, at Delhi's behest, by his brother-in-law, G.M. Shah in 1984. The Shah Government was formed by defectors from the National Conference. Apart from being a puppet administration, Shah regime was incompetent and corrupt. The Union Home Ministry and the local Congressmen instigated communal clashes in the Valley resulting in the dismissal of Shah Government in 1986. Fresh elections to the legislature occurred in 1987, bringing Farooq Abdullah back to power. This election was the proverbial last straw for the people of the Valley. The election was brazenly and massively rigged. The opposition

candidates, their election agents and supporters were ruthlessly persecuted. They were jailed and tortured. The die was cast in favour of militancy. A number of factors imposed the path of militancy on the youth. India's blatant refusal over the years to honour its solemn pledge to hold a plebiscite in the State, denial of elementary human and political rights, active discrimination against the Muslims in employment, political and administrative corruption, insensitivity to basic needs of people- conspired to convert the placid Valley into a volcano.

A look at the following statistics collected in July'87 is revealing. Out of the 22 secretaries to the Government of Jammu and Kashmir, only 5 are Muslims. There are about 67 Central Government establishments in the Kashmir Valley, including subordinate offices and corporations. Of the 14,743 employees working in the Central Govt. offices, Muslims constitute 6.8% in the officer class, 13% in the clerical grade and 15% in the class IV category. The percentage of Muslim officers in the nationalised banks in Kashmir is barely 1.5. The figures of the State Government employees are not encouraging either. Muslims constitute more than 64% of the state population and their share in services is 57%-- mostly occupying the lower rungs of administration. (Tapan Bose et,al India's Kashmir War March'90).

This writer in his letter of resignation to the Government of J&K in June 1986 charged as follows: "The policies and goals of the department of Medical Education have militated particularly against the just interests of the Muslim community. A glance at the staff pattern of the two Medical Colleges of the State causes great distress. It is certainly in the public interest to note that of the 222 doctors working in the various departments of the two colleges, the Muslims number just 78 i.e a measly 35% of the staff. A possible argument that no Muslims are available for jobs in the Medical Colleges is untenable. Qualified, competent and eligible Muslim doctors are systematically side-tracked. Rules and norms for appointments and promotions are more often than not honoured

in the breach than observance. Policy of 'pick and choose' over the years has created widespread frustration in the profession"

The state of affairs prevalent in the department of Medical Education repeats itself in other departments. The people of Kashmir, particularly the youth, have given violent vent to their pent up agony.

CHAPTER 14

BRUTAL CRACKDOWN

جس خاک کے ضمیر میں ہوا تشر چنار

Trans: ممکن نہیں کہ سرد ہو وہ خاکِ ارجبند
اقبالؒ

*The clay that conceals within its bosom the living fire of the Chinara,
How can it be that such clay can ever cool to die!*

Iqbal

Having exhausted all peaceful avenues of winning the inalienable right of self-determination, the youth of Kashmir switched over to the path of militancy. They established contacts with Amanullah Khan, the founder of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF). In April 1988, a group of youngmen, harassed and tortured by the establishment during the 1987 elections, crossed the Line of Control to receive training in the use of arms and explosives in Azad Kashmir. This group included Azam Inquilabi, Bilal Siddiqi, Ejaz Ahmed Dar, Ishfaq Majid, Mohammad Yasin Malik, Abdul Hamid Sheikh, Javed Ahmed Mir, Mushtaq Ahmed Zargar, Mohammad Ahsan Dar, Mohammad Abdullah Bangroo, Ayub Bangroo, Maqbool Alai, Javed Jehangir, Mohammad Ashraf Dar, Ghulam Rasul, Mushtaq-ul-Islam, Shaukat Bakshi, Firdous Ahmed and Shabir Madani. After their return, the situation in Kashmir changed dramatically.

Farooq Abdullah, the puppet Chief Minister, got rapidly isolated from the people and he was openly branded as a traitor to the cause of freedom. He was heckled and jeered when he attempted to address an Idd congregation in Srinagar, in 1988.

Innumerable bomb blasts occurred throughout the Valley. Ejaz Ahmed Dar, a frontline member of the JKLF was killed

on 18th September 1988, in an encounter with the security personnel posted at the residence of A.M. Watali, deputy inspector-general of Kashmir Police. The news of this incident spread like wild fire and the militants made their presence felt in Kashmir with a bang. The people unhesitatingly called them 'mujahideen'. A call for hartal on 27th October 1988 was given by the militants to register the protest of Kashmiris against the entry into Kashmir of the Indian army on the same day in 1947. The response of people was total and unqualified. A number of clashes occurred between people demanding right of self-determination and the security forces. Between August '88 and May '89, as many as 30 innocent, unarmed people were killed in police firings (Shabnum Qayoom vol III-introduction). Anees Hamadani, a prominent youthful writer and broadcaster was killed by the security forces on 31st August '89, without any provocation.

The ranks of militants swelled rapidly from the original one score to a few thousand in the course of a few months. The militants issued public warnings to members of the National Conference and other pro-Indian political outfits to dissociate themselves from anti-people politics. Similarly, police informants were warned to desist from their nefarious activities. Thousands of paid advertisements appeared in the local press, on behalf of political opportunists and petty power brokers, proclaiming their dissociation from anti-people politics. They assured the general public that they stood for legitimate rights of Kashmiris.

Under the pretext of apprehending militants, the security forces launched the Jamia Masjid Operation on 25th August '89. It was a Friday congregation when the security forces besieged the historic mosque. The forces entered the Masjid and committed desecration. Thousands of people were harassed, searched, insulted and 300 devotees were illegally and unfairly arrested and subjected to interrogation.

Shabir Shah, a legendary young man in his late thirties, was rearrested on 28th September '89. He joined the freedom struggle of Kashmir in 1968 at the incredibly young age of 14.

Protesting against Sheikh Abdullah's ambivalence on the Kashmir issue, Shabir Shah was arrested at Mujahid Manzil, Srinagar and jailed for 6 months, for the first time in 1968. He has thus far spent nearly 16 years of his youth in incarceration. He belongs to the Peoples League, founded in October 1974, whose goal is peaceful pursuit of winning self-determination for Kashmir. Shabir Shah's rearrest on 28th September was widely resented and provoked angry demonstrations. Needless to say that he is under detention without trial.

Abdul Hamid Sheikh, a prominent member of the JKLF, was shot at and injured in an encounter with the security forces in October '89. He was hospitalised where he was put under arrest. The JKLF kidnapped Rubia Saeed, daughter of Mufti Saeed, India's Home Minister, in December '89 and kept her a hostage until the release of Hamid Sheikh and four other militants. The Government of India and the State administration yielded and secured Rubia's release on 14th December 1989, in exchange for the release of five militants, including Hamid Sheikh. The people were jubilant at their achievement and surging crowds came on the streets to express their solidarity with the freedom fighters. The security forces resorted to indiscriminate firing on people on 15th December, 1989 resulting in the death of 7 people. Repression was let loose on a vast scale, provoking an unprecedented mass uprising. Curfew was clamped throughout the Valley on 15th December 1989 and it continues till date (29.5.91), with about 15 hours relaxation now during the daytime.

The Kashmiris are irrevocably alienated from the Indian political mainstream. The Lok Sabha elections of November '89 were boycotted by people and less than 1% voters exercised their franchise. Yet, the 'honourable' members from Kashmir adorned the Lok Sabha as a proof of Kashmir being an integral part of India! India is preparing for elections to the Lok Sabha, proposed to be held in May 1991 and for the first time the Government of India, in recognition of the ground realities obtaining in Kashmir, have decided not to hold elections in Kashmir 'for the time being'.

The militants gunned down Yusuf Halwai, a prominent worker of the National Conference. This episode practically wiped out the National Conference and it is essentially a party now on paper only. Tika Lal Taplu, a well known functionary of the Bharatiya Janta Party, a Hindu chauvinist organisation, was killed on 9th October 1989. N.K. Ganju, a retired sessions judge was shot dead in November '89. It may be recalled that Ganju had passed the death sentence against Mohammad Maqbool Butt in 1968, on an alleged murder charge. Maqbool Butt was subsequently hanged in Tihar Jail, Delhi on 11th February 1984 and is buried within the jail premises. It is widely believed in Kashmir that he was physically liquidated for his political convictions. Maqbool Butt is regarded as the founder of the current freedom movement and is hailed as a great martyr. His death anniversaries are observed with due solemnity.

The mass upsurge in Kashmir, coupled with the rising militancy, crippled Farooq Abdullah's administration. The government resorted to brute force against the agitating people. The security forces massacred 18 unarmed, innocent people at Batmaloo, on 8th January 1990. Having failed to impose his authority, even with the help of indiscriminate firings, Farooq Abdullah's government resigned in the third week of January '90. Governor's rule was imposed on the State on 19th January and Delhi installed Jagmohan as the governor.

Jagmohan's entry into Kashmir is a ghastly landmark in our long and chequered history as it signalled planned massacre of people, burning alive of human beings, indefinite curfew, illegal raids and searches, arrests and detentions, interrogation and torture, thievery and extortion, molestation and rape, humiliation of young and old, desecration of mosques and graveyards and destruction of human habitations and business establishments. Jagmohan unleashed state terrorism on a massive and unprecedented scale. His first day in office was marked by raids and searches with the ostensible objective of flushing out the militants. About 400 young people, both Muslims and Hindus, were dragged out from their homes, at the

dead of night, in the Kanikadal area of Srinagar. They were mercilessly beaten and taken away.

On 21st January '90, a procession of about 20,000 people staged a protest march against illegal searches and arrests. When the peaceful procession reached the Gawkadal area of Srinagar, the Indian security forces opened fire without any provocation. This resulted in the death of 60 people on the spot and injuries to hundreds of people. One of the victims of this carnage was Azlal Hasan, author of 4 books, including one on Gandhi's non-violence! Farooq Ahmed Wani, a public health engineer who miraculously survived this massacre in spite of receiving six bullets himself is a living witness to the ruthlessness and the anti-Muslim bias of the security forces (Tapan Bose - India's Kashmir war page 5). Ever since 21st January '90, the killings of innocent people at the hands of security forces has been routinised in Kashmir. A massive but peaceful procession against the Gawkadal carnage was subjected to unwarranted firing on 22nd January, at Alam Gari Bazar, resulting in the death of 10 people. Worse still, the security forces prevented hospital ambulances from carrying the injured to various hospitals. Fiftyfive unarmed civilians were gunned down in Handwara town on 25th January. The entire Valley is under siege. The security forces are omnipresent and have launched an undeclared war on the hapless people of Kashmir.

The imposition of indefinite curfew for more than 15 months now, with relaxations of a few hours during daytime, has dislocated normal life very considerably. The shops are more often closed than open resulting in non-availability of essential commodities. The closure of banks disrupted business activities. Tourist industry has come to a grinding halt. Drugs were in short supply for months creating crises in hospitals. The Post and Telegraph departments have ceased to function normally. The only visible sign of Jaggmohan's administration and of the Government of India is the presence of heavily armed security forces entrenched all over the Valley.

With a blanket ban on peaceful assembly of people,

the political platform has vanished in Kashmir. The void thus caused has been filled in by the mosques. Ever since January'90, the mosque has provided a vital and the only platform for articulating political aspirations. The loud speakers of mosques in the first few months of 1990 were blaring all night with slogans like: "We want freedom" and, "The Kashmir we have nourished with our blood is ours."

The unlawful raids and searches of houses have practically touched every Kashmiri. A house to house, room to room, closet to closet searches have been made all over the Valley, under the pretext of apprehending the militants. Some localities have been subjected to the humiliating experience of searches more than a dozen times. These exercises are violative of norms and standards of any civilised society. In the name of flushing out militants, the aggressive security forces have beaten people mercilessly, tied people to trees, stripped them and taunted by satirical remarks about *azadi* (freedom); women have been molested on a large scale; household goods have been either smashed or looted. Security forces have even derived vicarious pleasure by mixing rice, kerosene and charcoal in many houses. Innocuous items like the local Urdu newspapers, photographs of Ayatullah Khomeini, Benazir Bhutto and Imran Khan proved red rags to the security bulls. People discovered ingenious methods to protect their valuables and cash. They dug the earth of their compounds and buried their household goods and even foodgrains. Initially, the male members of dwellings were permitted to stay indoors during the searches. The trend subsequently became harsher and now at the crack of dawn, areas are cordoned off and announcements are made for all men to come out of their homes and assemble in an open space in the locality. Men have to brave the scorching heat of summer and the subzero temperature of winter for more than 12 hours, while their womenfolk stay inside the houses at the total mercy of the searching soldiers. The men are paraded before camouflaged police informants ostensibly to catch the militants. They are either let off after a humiliating and nerve racking wait of more than 12 hours or are capriciously taken away for

interrogation. The extent and nature of searches can be appreciated by the fact that even hospitals were not exempted. Sowra Institute, a prestigious hospital of Srinagar was subjected to raids and searches at least half-a-dozen times. The security forces smashed medical equipment, gate-crashed into operation theatres and even harassed the inpatients and the medical and nursing staff.

Graveyards and shrines were dug at a number of places possibly to unearth arms and ammunition. The hideous game of searches which started on an organised scale on 19th January 1990 continues unabated till date (29 May 1991). Such is the mortification caused by searches that some superstitious Kashmiris have resorted to charms to ward off the evil soldiers! Apart from raids and searches of houses, the various modes of transport are all subjected to checks routinely. At every roundabout, crossing and nook, the bus passengers have to disembark for body searches. Private cars are also checked with a nauseating regularity. Pedestrians are no exception to frequent checks and body searches.

The killing spree continued in February '90. Two episodes of unprovoked firing occurred on either side of Amirakadal (bridge). On the Lal Chowk side, 10 people were shot dead on 7th February and a commercial complex was put on fire. On the Gonikhan side of the bridge, another 10 people were killed on 14th February, including an octogenarian, Ghulam Mohammad Buch.

Curfew was relaxed during the daytime in the second half of February '90. This afforded a golden opportunity to people to give vent to their aspirations. Massive demonstrations were held in Srinagar in support of demand for freedom. The first peaceful procession was organised by the local Bar Association. People from all walks of life - doctors, engineers, school and university teachers, peasants, workers, students, artisans, writers, poets, intellectuals and traders participated in peaceful demonstrations. On the 1st March 1990, an estimated 1.5 million men and women, from all corners of Kashmir, demonstrated in Srinagar and petitioned the United Nations through its local office to honour its commitment of

a plebiscite in Kashmir. Unnerved by the unprecedented uprising in Kashmir, the Governor resorted to scorched-earth policy. The army jawans resorted to unwarranted firing on peaceful demonstrators at Zakura, on the outskirts of Srinagar, killing 20 people. The same day (1.3.90), the jawans of the Indian Army stopped a bus at the Tengpora Bye Pass near Batmaloo and asked the passengers to disembark. Without any rhyme or reason, the innocent commuters were gunned down resulting in 15 casualties. Jagmohan's response to these barbarities was that he was handling the situation in Kashmir with "utmost love and compassion".

The security forces swooped upon Chanpora, Srinagar on 7th March. A number of women were molested and Zoona and Zaina were gang-raped by the security forces (Tapen Bose - India's Kashmir war). This incident caused widespread indignation resulting in a women's demonstration at the local United Nation's Office. The demonstrators were mercilessly baton-charged causing injuries to many women. The injured women sought refuge in a nearby mosque which was desecrated by the security personnel.

Dilshada Bano, wife of Gulzar Ahmed of Khanyar was shot dead in her compound, by the security forces on 20th February 1990. A pregnant woman, along with her 8 year old son, Mubashir were gunned down on 29th March at Zaldagar together with the driver of the autorickshaw in which they were travelling. The evening news telecast from Delhi described all the three deceased as 'terrorists'. A number of school children, including one Bilal Ahmed were receiving private tuition at a Hindu teacher's house in Vicharnag, Srinagar. On 31st March, the security forces entered the teacher's house and killed the lone Muslim child after ascertaining his name and faith, leaving other inmates of the house untouched. (Tarkunde-Report on Kashmir situation).

Ishfaq Majid, leader of the J.K.L.F was killed in an encounter with the security forces on 30th March '90. This caused widespread grief amongst people. He was buried in the newly designated Martyrs graveyard at Idgah, Srinagar. His first death

anniversary was observed this year with great solemnity and high tributes were paid to the outstanding martyr.

Consequent upon exchange of fire between the security forces and militants on 1st April'90, at Nawpora, Srinagar, a number of innocent passers-by became the victims of state terrorism. The security personnel did not allow the injured to be moved to hospital. The human rights activists who happened to pass that way were kind enough to shift the injured to a nearby hospital. 'The hospitals were overflowing with injured people'. The human rights group learnt heart-rending accounts of brutalities inflicted on people by the security forces (Tarkunde -Report on Kashmir situation).

The Srinagar Bar Association records gruesome murders of women by the security forces. Jalla Bano, B.A., L.L.B., daughter of G.R.Wani, resident of Tarabal Srinagar was shot dead by the security personnel inside her house on 4th May'90. Nine bullets were fired upon her neck resulting in severance of the head from her body. Other women killed include Dilshada of Tarabal and Sweety, a ten year old girl (daughter of Ghulam Mohammad R/O Qammarwari) who was killed on 7th June'90, Shakeela, aged 20, full-term pregnant was shot dead on 21st May; Habla Begam W/O A.G.Naqash R/O Malaratta, aged 65, was shot dead inside her house.

Following the kidnapping, by the militants, of Mushirul Haq, Vice-Chancellor of Kashmir University and his assistant Abdul Gani and V.C. Khera, General Manager of the H.M.T factory on 6th April'90, a seventeen day round-the-clock curfew was imposed on the entire Valley. Life came to a standstill. Eatables were unavailable forcing people to subsist on wild vegetables, not normally fit for human consumption. Funerals became an ordeal; white shrouds for the dead could not be procured. The dead could not be taken to their graveyards and instead buried in the vicinity of their homes. Hospitalisation of the sick was impossible. An epidemic of meningitis among children in March-April 1990 resulted in many preventable deaths as no satisfactory medical care was possible.

Despondency prevailed all over the Valley. The children went without milk. Tension and anxiety gripped everyone. Children suffered from night-terrors. Nobody in Kashmir knows what the next minute has in store for oneself. The continuous 17 day old curfew together with aggressive raids was meant to terrorise and tame the people and reduce them to starvation level.

Ten people including a ten year-old boy, Shaukat Ahmed, were killed by the security forces on 9th May at Magarmal, Srinagar.

Molvi Mohammad Farooq, a prominent religious leader of Kashmir was assassinated in his house by unidentified gunmen on 21st May 1990. Within hours of this tragedy, the Governor held militants responsible for this dastardly act. No prosecution has, however, been launched even after the passage of one year. The general belief among the people is that Molvi Farooq was killed at the instance of Jagmohan. When his mortal remains were carried in a procession from the Sowra Institute to his ancestral house, the security forces unleashed a barbarous attack on the mourners, near the Islamia College, Srinagar.

Three successive groups of pallbearers were shot dead and the Molvi's dead body even was sprayed with bullets. 50 people, including 3 women and one child were massacred on the spot. More than 250 people received bullet injuries. In spite of blatant lies trotted out by the then prime minister of India, V.P. Singh in regard to the massacre of peaceful mourners, Chandra Shekar, a prominent member of the ruling party, (presently prime minister) admitted in the Parliament that the massacre was totally unjustifiable and 'every Indian must hang his head in shame'. New Delhi replaced Jagmohan by G.C. Saxena as the new ruler of Kashmir. Saxena is a retired intelligence chief of India. Jagmohan shall remain the most despised person in Kashmir for a long time to come in view of his heinous crimes.

If the entire Muslim population of the Valley is alienated from and bitter towards India, thanks are principally due to

Jagmohan's repressive anti-Muslim policies. 130 Muslim civil servants were unfairly dismissed from service for alleged anti-national activities. They were not even served a show-cause notice nor were they charge-sheeted.

One hundred and thirtytwo government officers of Kashmir issued an appeal to Citizens of the World on 29th May'90, to prevail upon India to stop state terrorism in the Valley. This appeal was endorsed by more than 10,000 officials of the Jammu and Kashmir State. The appeal, interalia, said, "The massacre at Islamia College on 21st May is the goriest form of administrative action pointing certainly to a design of genocidal proportions already being implemented in this unfortunate land.... the incident has brought shame to Indian democracy and left a scar on the psyche of Kashmir The Islamia College instance is the umpteenth such incident in the past 5 months. Gawkadal, Zakura, Tengpora, Alam Gari Bazar, Lal Chowk, Handwara, Bhaderwah, Bandipore and Anantnag are no longer names of places but knells that remind one of the firing exercise by the para-military forces that have taken a collective toll of many hundred lives.... The innocent victims have been accorded the epithet of terrorists though the deceased included pregnant women, children, the old and infirm too..... The dehumanising process touched its nadir when a bride and her bridesmaid were pulled from a bus by the security forces and raped. The bridegroom was shot dead. This happened in Budasgam, Anantnag on 17th May' 90". Finally the statement appealed to the peace-loving people of the world to persuade the Indian Government to respect the genuine aspirations of the people of Kashmir, put an end to repressive measures and adopt a pragmatic approach towards this serious problem.

Undaunted by appeals, protests and condemnations, the security forces stuck to their plan of massacre. Saquib Bashir, an 18-month-old lad was shot dead in his mother's lap inside their home in Idgah area on 9th June. Similarly, Shameema, a 14 year old girl was killed the same day. Even the handicapped children did not evoke any mercy from the security forces. Four congenitally blind children of

Ghulam Rasul Malik of Kupwara area were mercilessly beaten as the security personnel labelled them terrorists! Ghulam Hassan Bisati, while closing his shop at Khanyar, Srinagar on 19th June was showered with 15 bullets and then his dead body was trampled upon. Age is no bar to state terrorism. Maulana Noor-ud-Din of Tral, aged 110, was arrested on 27th June on the suspicion of being a terrorist!

The security forces let loose hell on the people of Pampore, Pinglina and Panzigam in the Pulwama district. The people were severely beaten, insulted and humiliated. In Panzigam a number of women were raped at gun-point on 6th July while their menfolk were tied to trees. The Indian security forces apply the prescription of torture and rape to contain 'terrorism' in Kashmir.

Arson has been widely resorted to, to bring people into abject submission. The security forces burnt down a shopping complex at Sopore on 25th June resulting in considerable material loss. The fire tenders were prevented from doing their job. Twenty one women were raped in Sopore, including Hasina who had delivered a baby 50 days back. The security forces opened fire indiscriminately resulting in deaths and injuries. Scores of people sustained fractures on account of beatings. Loot was freely resorted to in the shops and houses. The Sopore Hospital building was also subjected to firing. Seventy six people were forced to lick faeces. Sopore was put to flames again in July 1990 causing destruction of about 200 shops. In September '90, another 54 shops were gutted in Sopore.

Wadwan village, 23 kms from Srinagar, faced full fury of the security forces on 26th June. Sixty women complained about the misbehaviour of security forces whereas 12 others were gang-raped by the forces. Abdullah Malik and Habib Malik have charged the security forces of raping their wives. Thievery had a field day. Residents of Wadwan were unburdened of their cash, jewellery and other valuables. To humiliate the helpless and panic-stricken people, they were asked to urinate on the graves of their ancestors. Mohammad Jamal Mir of Naidgam was beaten, shot dead and his dead body was ripped open to unearth weapons!

Women, protesting in Srinagar on 3rd July, against the barbarities of security forces, had to face a great ordeal. Their veils were snatched, clothes torn and they were baton-charged causing injuries to dozens of women. On the same day, a number of women in Sopore and Kawoosa (Narabal) were undressed by the security forces and hot irons placed on their bodies. Twenty houses were burnt down in Kawoosa.

Women have been particularly singled out, by the security forces, for barbarous treatment. Three unmarried girls of LalBazar, Srinagar were picked up by the forces and taken to the cantonment area. They were raped and released after 2 days. A female pedestrian was taken inside the Islamia College picket ostensibly for body searching. She was raped and released the following day (Bar Association Report). Four prominent Indian women human rights activists, after visiting Kashmir in June '90 have recorded: "This is the first time when Kashmiri women have become targets of brute force on such a large scale. Many women have been raped, girls have been forced to have oral sex with men of the security forces, they have been molested and assaulted in front of their fathers and brothers. They have been made to watch their fathers and brothers being given electric shocks in the genitals (Kashmir Imprisoned, page 47).

The Government of India gave yet another blow to law, decency, morality and ethics in July '90. The Valley and the Muslim belt of Jammu province were declared as Disturbed Areas and the Armed Forces Special Powers Ordinance was promulgated. These draconian enactments confer on the security forces, extraordinary and arbitrary powers of arrest, seizure, search and of causing death and destruction of property. These black laws govern Kashmir since 6th July 1990.

The security forces burnt down the villages of Watmagam and Odina, 25 kilometres from Srinagar, on 8th July, resulting in destruction of 200 houses. Mustafa Sofi was burnt alive and Afzal, Ibrahim Mir and Ghulam Rasul were shot dead at Watmagam. Eight people were shot dead by the security forces in

Baramulla on 14th July, without any conceivable justification. The security personnel ran berserk in Nawa Bazar, Srinagar on 21st July and killed 5 people inside their homes; the deceased included Zooni, a 75 year-old woman. Twenty two houses were burnt down in Safakadal on 29th July'90. School children, too, have not escaped the wrath of state terrorism. Students of two Christian Missionary schools - Tyndale Biscoe and Mallinson, attempted to take out a peaceful procession in protest against police excesses but they were severely beaten causing injuries to a number of children. The drivers of trucks and auto-rickshaws were no exception to atrocities. They are stopped by the whimsical forces and subjected to harassment, insults, humiliations and beatings for no valid reasons. Mohd Sultan Dar was killed in Pattan while he was driving his truck in July'90. Needless to say that the truck driver was branded a 'terrorist'. Twelve innocent people were killed by the security personnel in the main street of Pattan on 1st August'90. Predictably, the slain pedestrians were dubbed as 'terrorists'.

The vandalism indulged in by the security forces can be gauged by the fate of orchards. Innumerable fruit trees were felled in Romu, Pakherpora, Sopore, Kupwara, Langeet and other areas of the valley. Fruit was taken away as booty.

Mashali Mohalla, Srinagar witnessed a planned massacre on 6th August. The security forces were fired upon by unidentified gunmen in broad-daylight and in retaliation the security forces gatecrashed into houses late at night and sprayed bullets indiscriminately. Ten people died on the spot and many others were wounded. Loot of cash and household valuables followed the carnage.

Three hundred academics of the University of Kashmir issued an appeal to mankind on 10th August'90, which inter alia said: "Kashmir is bleeding, burning and groaning under brutalities unheard of in the history of repression..... Since the imposition of curfew in December 1989, no day has passed when people have not been killed. In between there have been large-scale

massacres..... On two occasions fire was opened on innocent passengers travelling in matadors resulting in a number of deaths..... Recently, for a sadistic change, an octogenarian man was strangled to death in Anantnag. The design is more than clear. India has embarked on a policy of genocide of the Muslims of Kashmir. The only precedents of this genocide in human history are those of Genghis and Halaku, with the difference that the present genocide is calculated and planned whereas those of the Mongols were the result of momentary frenzy..... We appeal to the world conscience to awaken and lend us succour in the worst crisis of our history. We appeal to human rights organisations like Amnesty International to prevail upon India to let it visit Kashmir and see for itself the plight of its people. We appeal to the world media to highlight the atrocities and indignities which are regularly perpetrated against innocent Kashmiris. And, as India is preparing to receive Nelson Mandela in New Delhi, we appeal to the world to ask India to begin its charity at home."

The Amnesty International expressed its desire to visit Kashmir but the Government of India, prodded by an ex-prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, vehemently opposed the proposed visit. This speaks volumes about India's lip-service to human rights and exposes the wide gap between its precept and example.

Unhindered and undaunted by their cumulative wrongs, the security forces killed about 100 people at Handwara and 17 at Trahgam on 1st August '90. The dead bodies at Handwara were found in the streets, in the fields and in wells. The administration put forth its usual alibi that the deceased were terrorists and got killed in an encounter with the security forces.

Srigufwara, a village in Anantnag district was burnt down on 12th August causing destruction of 42 houses. The preacher of the local mosque was shot dead in cold blood. The security forces demonstrated their vengeance, greed, lust and revenge at Pazipora, Kupwara on 10th August. 45 people were killed inside their homes, on the roads and in the fields. The dead bodies

were mutilated. 15 women were raped and their clothes were burnt. Loot was the order of the day and a number of houses were razed to ground. As usual, a number of young men were taken away to interrogation centres. In Potshai, Lolah, 25 houses were burnt down on 15th August.

The security forces have commandeered a number of schools, colleges, private houses, hotels and other vacant premises. The unpredictable behaviour of security personnel has driven the harassed people to seek refuge in mosques and shrines.

The story of the five kilometre-deep security belt all along the Line of Control is a really grim one. People living in this belt are literally cut-off from Srinagar. However, an enterprising journalist, A.R. War managed to enter the border town of Uri, 100 kilometres from Srinagar, in July '90. He has reported emigration of more than 500 families to Pakistan Kashmir. He found the people in the border areas absolutely mortified. The movement of people outside their modest dwellings is nearly impossible. Searches, raids and beatings are a routine. Shahji, an 80 year-old man was arrested and killed. Some of the arrested men had their eyes gouged out; the wounded had chillies rubbed into their wounds; an infant was trampled to death; a 17 year-old girl was raped and subsequently killed (Takbir 28.8.1990 - A.R. War)

A heart-rending incident occurred on 12th September, at Thune, 10 kilometres from Kangan (Ganderbal Tehsil). 30 youngmen travelling in a bus were burnt alive inside the bus, by the security forces. After the ghastly incident, the deceased were labelled as terrorists. Another 17 youngmen were burnt alive on 21st October '90 at Kalaroos, Kupwara district.

Intellectuals and academics are no exception to the fury of security personnel. Javeed Khan, reader in the department of law, Kashmir University was shot dead at point-blank range at Khanyar on 2nd September '90. Before he was killed by the trigger happy soldiers, he produced his driving licence and identity card but in vain. A number of lawyers have been beaten, arrested and tortured.

Doctor's lot is no better. Dr. A.A. Guru, the Chief Heart Surgeon at the prestigious Sowra Institute, Srinagar was jailed for more than 3 months on the allegation of being sympathetic to militants. Dr. Afzal Wani, the Neuro-Surgeon at Sowra was also jailed and subjected to interrogation. Dr. Rafi Vaida, a youthful surgeon was similarly jailed.

Handwara town faced the wrath of security forces, yet again, on Gandhiji's birth anniversary on 2nd October '90. Ten people were shot dead and another five were burnt alive. Four hundred shops and 80 houses were gutted. The whole town was reduced to rubble and the dead bodies could not be rescued for days together. Kawdara, Srinagar was burnt down on 7th October, reducing 460 houses to rubble. Thirty houses were razed to the ground on 8th October at Noor Bagh.

The security forces put on fire 50 shops and 3 houses at Sangrama, a village near Sopore. Six women travelling in a bus on 24th September from Srinagar to Sopore were brought down from the bus and raped. A Canadian journalist, Laura Lambie, on a professional visit to Kashmir, was also not spared the indignity of rape by the security forces on 15th October. When the Canadian embassy in Delhi protested, the government promised to bring the guilty security personnel to book.

Employees of the State Government, numbering 137,000, went on a three-day strike in July and a five-day strike in early September '90 to register their protest against the unprecedented situation created by repressive measures unleashed by the Governor. Instead of responding positively to employees grave concern, the Governor dismissed from service, most arbitrarily, five senior Muslim officers. The employees reacted by going on an indefinite strike from 15th September. The Governor was simply insensitive to the hardships caused to people consequent upon the strike. The entire Valley's governmental activities came to a grinding halt. After an agonising pause of 72 days, the Governor agreed to concede the demands of the striking employees. The 5 dismissed officers were reinstated and the Government promised to move the special court

from Jammu to Srinagar in order to facilitate the trial of detenus jailed under the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act. The employees returned to work after 72 days.

Anantnag town experienced many brutal assaults from the security forces causing a number of casualties and destruction of property. On 28th October'90, sixteen people were gunned down and 500 houses and shops gutted. Similarly, the security forces burnt down 12 houses in Tangmarg, 7 houses in Kakpora, 10 houses and 22 shops in Bijbehara, 12 houses in Shalimar and 6 houses in Ganderbal.

In the 1st week of December'90, twenty two young men, alleged to be militants, were killed by the security personnel in the Kupwara area. A number of women were stripped and raped in Lodu, 20 kilometres from Srinagar, on 22nd December'90. Pakherpora witnessed the massacre of 10 people including a 10-month-old child named Azad Ahmed, on 25th December'90. This infant was killed inside his home and received 6 bullets on his tiny body. In Sahipora, Kupwara the security forces gatecrashed a house, at the dead of night, and gunned down in their beds all the four male members of the family-Shams Din Sofi, Habibullah Sofi, Ghulam Mohammad Sofi and Ramzan Sofi. On 19th January 1991, an alleged militant hurled a handgrenade at a security personnel bunker in the Magarmal area of Srinagar. A jeep carrying security personnel, whizzing past the site of the incident opened fire indiscriminately over a distance of one kilometre. Eighteen innocent pedestrians attending to their normal chores lost their lives. Following an exchange of fire between militants and the paramilitary forces at Dialgam, Anantnag on 30th January'90, the latter let loose hell on the village, the following day. Three innocent people-Abdul Gani Sheikh, Bashir Ahmed Magri and Abdul Rahim Najar were brutally beheaded. The security personnel did not even spare the Kashmir Armed Police jawan, Naseeb Singh who was shot dead. Another act of great brutality was displayed by the security forces in Kokarnag where 4 fire brigade employees were burnt alive and two innocent civilians were

beheaded.

On 1st February'91, the security forces killed 5 people and burnt down a number of houses in Palapora (Anantnag). For no fault of his, Mohammad Iqbal, a matador driver was asked to get down from his vehicle by the security personnel on 2nd February at Rangar Stop, Khanyar and shot dead at point-blank range. Similarly Nazir Ahmed, an auto-rickshaw driver was killed on 16th February. After an incident of cross-firing between the militants and security forces in Batmaloo on 8th February, the harassed inhabitants of the locality were stripped by the security forces and made to lie on snow for hours on end. The security forces were fired upon in Dalal Mohalla, Srinagar on 18th February and in retaliation they wrecked vengeance on the inhabitants of the locality. Two brothers-Bashir Ahmed Langoo and Shabir Ahmed Langoo were killed inside their bed rooms and Abdul Khaliq Butt was killed in an adjacent house. The security personnel killed 2 people and injured 14 others in unwarranted firing at Amirakadal (bridge) on 21st February. Thirty shops were burnt down in the Exhibition Grounds of Srinagar on 22nd February.

Kunen Poshpora, small hamlets in the Kupwara district, symbolise the savagery of the security forces and the brazenness of the Government of India. On the night of 23rd February'91, hundreds of uniformed soldiers swooped upon the villages and let loose hell on the inhabitants, particularly the women. All the men of the area were huddled together in one house and subjected to torture. Fifty three women were gang-raped all night. When the ghastly news appeared in the local press, the Government of India flatly denied the veracity of the reports. The beastly happenings have, however, been corroborated by the Basic Rights Committee of Kashmir and the international media. Seven alleged militants surrendered to the security forces in a mosque in Poshwari village at Trahgam on 16th March. They were dragged outside the mosque and shot dead in cold blood. The security forces were fired upon by alleged militants in Gulab Bagh, Srinagar on 11th March, and as a reprisal, they killed 5

people, nearly two kilometres away from the site of firing.

Apart from isolated and localised raids and searches, the security forces resorted to simultaneous searches over extensive areas. A continuous 96-hour search was launched from 16th March in an extensive part of Srinagar, from Nawpora to Saidakadal. The 100,000 inhabitants were literally under house arrest and had precious little by way of eatables. Ostensibly to unearth the arms of militants, the security forces even went to the extent of digging graves in Malakhah, the largest graveyard of the city.

On 31st March '91, it was the turn of Sonarkalipora and Rajwan villages in the Beru tehsil to face undeserved fury of the security forces. Men were mercilessly beaten, tortured and harassed. No consideration for age, education or status was shown to any man. The female members of the security forces collected 16 pretty young girls of the two villages and stripped them. The securitymen feasted their eyes on the nude and hapless village damsels. Before leaving the villages, the security forces, as usual, took away booty consisting of cash, valuables like cameras, calculator watches, etc.

The security forces exchanged fire with the militants in Malangam, Bandipora on 21st April '91. Out of pure vengeance, the security forces entered the house of one Rajwali. Eight inmates of the house were chained, dragged out and shot dead at point-blank range. In the Idgah area of Srinagar, another six innocent people were killed on the 21st April, including one child who was playing cricket and a shopkeeper who was perusing the morning newspaper.

The security forces claim to have killed 300 militants in the last 15 months. Apart from this, the number of innocent Kashmiris killed, according to conservative estimates, since January 90 is well over 3,000. The deceased include young and old, men and women, toddlers and the handicapped. The hospitals of the Valley have been overflowing with patients with gunshot injuries. The three city hospitals of Srinagar-S.M.H.S, Bone and Joint and Sowra Institute have received 1100, 500 and 600 patients respectively with

gunshot wounds in the last 15 months. Though curfew restrictions have been in force since December 1989, the number of days when curfew was clamped round the-clock, in the entire Valley during the calendar year 1990, was 114. Apart from this, the people observed protest strikes, against massacres, arbitrary arrests, rapes and wanton searches, on 34 days.

According to guarded estimates, the number of innocent persons arrested in the last 15 months is well over 20,000. Apart from this, the local administration claims to have apprehended 800 militants. Barring a few score politicians, the detainees are predominantly the youth of Kashmir. They are kept in police lockups, in prisons and in the dreaded interrogation centres. Nobody knows the whereabouts of individual prisoners with certainty nor does anybody know for sure about the nature of their offences, if any. They have been dispersed in jails all over the length and breadth of India. No prosecutions have been made. The government deliberately conceals the names and other relevant details of those arrested. People are picked up arbitrarily without any summons or warrants. The conditions of detention are cruel and subhuman. A number of innocent people have died in prisons consequent upon torture.

The Jammu and Kashmir High Court Bar Association, Srinagar has released a list of prisoners tortured to death until 31st January 1991. Ali Mohammad Ahangar of Anantnag was arrested on 21st December 1988 and put in Benaras Jail, 1500 kilometres away from Kashmir. He died in the jail on 27th June 1990 and was buried in the jail premises. His family was informed of his death after the burial. Ghulam Qadir War, resident of Arizal, aged 65 died in the Jammu interrogation centre as a consequence of torture. He was buried at Trikota Nagar, Jammu - 350 kilometres from his home town. A petition was filed in the High Court at Srinagar for a post-mortem and permission for burial of the deadbody in Srinagar but the authorities refused to oblige. Other interrogation deaths include the following :- Aslam Jan Bhat R/O Chota Bazar (20.8.90); Abdul Sattar Wani R/O Kangan (16.11.90); Farooq Ahmed Dar R/O

Nowpora (26.12.90); Ghulam Qadir Ganai R/O Noor Bagh (4.9.90); Hilal Ahmed Tarabali R/O Maisuma (20.5.90); Mohammad Yusuf R/O Nai Sarak (1.10.90); Mushtaq Ahmed R/O Ganderbal (December'90); Shameen Ahmed Shah and M. Amin-Kathwari R/O Rainawari (22.12.90); Mohammad Ramzan R/O Prung (22.12.90); Mushtaq Ahmed R/O Lar, Ganderbal (4.1.91); Nazir Ahmed Darzi R/O Repora, Ganderbal (10.12.90); Mohammad Yusuf R/O Rafiababad (October'90); Sonaullah Sofi R/O Sopore (20.10.90); Din Mohd Sofi R/O Sopore (20.10.90); Ghulam Mohd Mir S/O Ali Mohd (29.7.90); M. Sultan Shah R/O Uri; Ghulam Mohd Shah- father of Peoples League leader, Shabir Shah (November'89); Mohd Ismail Mistri R/O Bijbehara (27.11.90); Imtiyaz A.Mir R/O Anantnag (30.10.90); Tarik Ahmed Khan R/O Islamabad; Altaf Ahmed R/O Haihama; A. Rafiq Peer R/O Rafiababad (16.9.90); Bashir Ahmed Khan R/O Uri (18.7.90); Bashir Ahmed 12 years old R/O Rafiababad (October'90); Bashir Ahmed R/O Dardapora Block; Farooq A. Mir R/O Sopore (October'90); Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din R/O Sopore (20.9.90); Ghulam Mohd Lone R/O Singhpora (22.8.90); Hayat Ahmed Dar R/O Sopore (2.10.90); M. Sultan Malik R/O Sopore (June'90); Nisar Ahmed Dhar R/O Parimpore (9.12.90); Shabir Ahmed Sulati R/O Narwara (12.5.90); Shabir Ahmed Sheikh R/O Lar, Ganderbal; Fayaz Ahmed Tantry R/O Islamabad (3.1.91).

Innocent young people detained in the interrogation centres are subjected to unprintable methods and forms of torture. Hot irons are applied to their bodies; rectums are torn by inserting bamboo poles; heavy rollers are passed over the legs; electric shocks are administered to various parts of the body including the genitals; salt is rubbed into fresh wounds; chillies are inserted into eyes, nose and genitals; cigarette butts are applied to skin; detainees are hung upside down. The Jammu and Kashmir High Court Bar Association has recorded woeful tales of the goings-on in the joint interrogation centre located at Jammu. "The detainees are forced to indulge in possibly all kinds of immoral and unnatural actions..... They are asked to practice sodomy and lick semen; their legs are stretched

to 180 degrees; heavy weight is tied to their private parts and they are forced to drink a lot of fluids resulting in full bladder but are unable to pass urine because the urethra is tied, causing them considerable agony."

Thousands of habeas-corpus petitions are collecting dust in the High Court. Human rights are totally denied to the detainees and they are subjected to third degree torture with impunity. Fundamental rights and law of the land have been superseded by law of the jungle.

Ever since New Delhi assumed direct control over Kashmir, the official media have resorted to a vicious campaign of disinformation. Massacres perpetrated by the security forces in broad daylight have been described as deaths resulting from cross-firing between the security forces and the militants. The official news is relayed from Jammu and New Delhi. Radio Kashmir broadcasts its news from Delhi and Srinagar Television telecasts its news from Jammu. The grim reality obtaining in the Valley is seldom reflected in the official news. There is total censorship of the atrocities and human rights violations occurring routinely in Kashmir.

Yusuf Jameel, the Srinagar correspondent of the BBC and Reuters was kidnapped by jawans of the Indian Army on 2nd June 1990. The Governor and the Government of India insisted for two days that the correspondent had been kidnapped by the militants. The Government of India made solemn declaration in the Supreme Court of India that the security forces had nothing to do with Yusuf Jameel's disappearance. When the world media raised a hue and cry about the extraordinary kidnapping of the journalist, Yusuf Jameel was released by the Army after 2 days of detention. So much for the credibility of the official media and of the Government of India in regard to coverage of the on-going movement in Kashmir.

The foregoing account is only representative and not an exhaustive catalogue of the massacres, widespread destruction and human rights violations of Himalayan proportions perpetrated in Kashmir by the Indian security forces. Fuller accounts of atrocities

are available in the reports published by the various human rights organisations and the Bar Association of Srinagar. Kashmir Impri-soned, authored by four Indian ladies, exposes the grave and widespread violations of human rights in Kashmir and comments:-

“The people of the Valley are infact living under virtual martial law. Members of the security forces quite often give voice of their aggressive Hindu communal bias and anti-Muslim prejudices during search operations. The suffering and terror let loose by the security forces damage the very foundation of secular democracy of India.”

Apart from the jawans of the army and of the para-military forces, the vital functionaries of the present dispensation in Kashmir are - the governor, his three advisors, the chief secretary, the police chief and the chief justice of the High Court. All these principal actors of the contemporary Kashmir scenario are, without an exception, alien to the land and its hapless people.

The policies pursued in the name of crackdown on the militants are in essence a smokescreen for brutal repression of the entire Valley. As of today, there is no right to life in Kashmir, let alone civilised luxuries like fundamental rights or more fundamentally elementary human rights. The Indian press, by and large, has been insensitive and callously indifferent to the goings-on in Kashmir. It has been content with publishing the official handouts only. The Indian Parliament has turned a Nelson's eye on the hell let loose in Kashmir since January'90. The average Indian citizen has been deliberately kept in dark about the Kashmir holocaust.

The state administration has revealed that the Indian security forces killed 80 alleged militants in the Chokibal area of Kupwara district on 5th May 1991. The authorities have not revealed the names of the deceased nor was anybody, including the pressmen, allowed to visit the place of this massacre. In spite of the High Court order that the deceased be handed over to their next of kin for funeral rites, the authorities have professedly disposed of the dead bodies in a manner and at a site not known to the general public. History,

perhaps, will not record the names of these 80 Kashmiri youth who sacrificed their lives for the motherland on the mountain tops. The grim tragedy and the attendant insults steeped the entire valley in terrible lamentation. A three-day strike, to mourn the dead, was observed all over Kashmir. Consequent upon its cynical disregard of the court order, the State administration is facing charge of contempt in the Jammu and Kashmir High Court.

While the Valley was still reeling under the effect of the Kupwara carnage, the security forces resorted to yet another bout of mass killings on 8th May. The localities which witnessed butchery included Dachigam, Nigin, Saida Kadal, Khawja Yarbail, Rainawari and Solena. At least 30 people were killed in these areas, including an engineering student of Kargil, Mohammad Ali who received bullets while he was playing cricket in the Engineering College campus. People in Khawja Yarbail were dragged out of their homes and boats and killed in cold blood. Some people were shot dead in the Dal Lake while they made a vain bid to escape the frenzy of the security forces. The gory finale to the happenings of 8th May occurred at Khanyar in the evening. While a congregation of nearly 15,000 unarmed mourners was busy in performing the last rites of the martyrs who had lost their lives that morning, the security forces opened fire without any conceivable justification. Eighteen people were killed on the spot and another 150 people received bullet injuries. The crestfallen mourners ran helter skelter, leaving behind their footwear and headgear. The state administration has indirectly confessed its guilt by suspending three security men. The administration has ordered an inquiry into the Khanyar slaughter. The people of Kashmir have promptly and publicly dissociated themselves from the inquiry as they consider these tactics on the part of administration as a mere eye-wash.

After an encounter with the militants in Kulgam, Anantnag district, on 13th May, the security forces ran berserk and killed four innocent civilians. They burnt down 50 houses and shops. The employees of the medical department, local telephone

exchange, local policemen and fire brigade staff were insulted, humiliated and beaten.

The administration has, through an order, imposed unwarranted restriction on funeral processions. Truth can be stranger than fiction but it is a fact that you need the government permission in today's Kashmir to carry your dead to the graveyards. Having denied people their human rights, the Indian authorities have now trampled upon the religious duties and obligations of Kashmiris.

Being a Kashmiri is a curse and being a youngman in Kashmir, under the present dispensation, is a crime. Asking for the right of freedom - a birthright, a right enshrined in the U.N. Charter, a right pledged to Kashmiris by the Security Council, a right promised to the people by both India and Pakistan - is to embrace death and destruction, interrogation and torture. The terrestrial paradise has become a vast slaughter house. Gone are the days when Kashmir rejuvenated its inhabitants. The youth of the Valley are languishing in the interrogation centres where they are maimed and mutilated.

Kashmir is dyed red with the blood of thousands of its martyrs. Blood of innocent Kashmiris has been shed all over the Valley -- on the snow capped mountains, in the forests, orchards and dales, in the lakes and the meadows, in the busy streets and the labyrinthine lanes and within the four walls of their dwellings. The tormented soul of Kashmir shall continue to be restless and the people shall continue to shed their blood until they have their tryst with freedom.

Inspite of the passage of 16 months since the Gawka-dal carnage of 21st January'90, the brutal crackdown against the oppressed Kashmiris continues with an unmitigated fury.

CHAPTER 15

MIGRATION OF THE PANDIT COMMUNITY

In the wake of mass uprising of Kashmiris against the brutal crackdown of the Indian army and the para-military forces, thousands of Kashmiri Pandits migrated to Jammu and Delhi. To understand the phenomenon of their migration, it is worthwhile to appraise the Kashmiri Pandit community historically.

The original inhabitants of Kashmir were the Nagas and the Pisacas. They were a tribal people free from shackles of caste and class. The first major cultural invasion of Kashmir by the Aryans occurred about 3,000 years ago. The entry of Aryans into Kashmir introduced the caste system and Brahmanism took its birth.

There is clear evidence to show that many of the Brahman inhabitants of Kashmir, were descendants of the Brahmans of other parts of India. Probably there had been several large scale immigrations of the Brahmans from the plains of India into the Valley of Kashmir from a remote period. The descendants of these immigrants seem to have composed the bulk of the Brahman population of Kashmir. (S.C. Ray - Early History and Culture of Kashmir, Page 97).

Ever since the birth of Brahmanism, the community of Kashmiri Brahmans has been a privileged caste and a pampered class. In ancient Kashmir, the Brahmans arrogated to themselves the right to choose the king and the king's daily duties consisted of the worship of gods and of the Brahmans. The Kshatriya ruling classes conferred rich endowments upon the Brahmans and their institutions. Large tracts of fertile lands were bestowed upon them. They were exempted from paying taxes on the ground that the Brahmans rendered spiritual service to the kingdom and thereby promoted its material welfare. Capital punishment was not applicable to the

Brahmans whereas a minor offence against them was dealt with harshly. The Brahmans were also exempted from the rigours of forced labour. On numerous occasions, the Brahmans coerced the rulers into accepting their unjust demands by resorting to hunger-strikes. These tactics also earned them undue advantages.

Kalhana, himself a Brahman catalogues "five evils" which, he says, destroyed the happiness and comforts of the people of Kashmir. Apart from the hunger strikes of the Brahmans, the other four being, the government officials, the ministers, members of the royal family and the obnoxious regulations. Kalhana calls these wily Brahmans as "villains and rogues" (M.L. Kapur - Kingdom of Kashmir, pages 212, 233).

The Brahmans constituted the bulk of the civil service. They made undue exactions from the poor peasantry, the artisans and the petty traders. They invented teachings, rituals and customs to maintain their superiority. This caused disturbance in social equilibrium resulting in feuds between the people and the nobles; between Kshatriyas and the Brahmans. Alignment of non-Brahman castes and classes occurred bringing into focus a class struggle against the Brahmans. The glamour of Brahmanical priestcraft started declining and people turned away from ritualistic ceremonies. It was around this time in the 3rd century B.C. that Buddhism made its triumphant entry into Kashmir. Apart from its revolutionary message that all human beings are born equal and salvation is equally open to all, the new faith promised a release from the stranglehold of Brahmans. Dramatically, all the non-Brahman castes and classes of Kashmir embraced Buddhism.

Buddhism prospered in Kashmir for more than eight centuries inspite of stiff resistance from the Brahmans. Having lost in dialectics to Buddhist scholars like Nagarjuna, the Brahmans resolved to wreck the new faith from within. They were aided by zealot kings like Nara-I and Samkaravarman who destroyed thousands of monasteries. Buddhists were relentlessly persecuted and Buddhism was consequently banished from kashmir. The violent counter-revo-

lution launched by the Brahmans resulted in their ascendancy again. Fresh waves of Brahman immigrants landed in Kashmir. The blood-thirsty king Mihirakula of the 6th century was cruel and ruthless to every caste and class except the Brahmans. He patronised the Brahmans and conferred enormous land grants on them. The Brahmans joined Mihirakula in shameless practices (Killam, Kashmiri Pandits, Page 7). Apart from Mihirakula, the other rulers who encouraged lots of Brahmans from outside to settle in Kashmir include Gopaditya, Didda and Jaya Simha, in the 6th, 10th and 12th centuries respectively. (M.L. Kapur, Kingdom of Kashmir, Page 231).

The Brahmans led a parasitic life. They enjoyed their privileged and honoured position at the expense of the working population. This bred great inequality among the people. No one could afford to show any disrespect to them. They called themselves as "gods on earth". (Kingdom of Kashmir page 232). The kings and the Brahmans lived in luxury whereas the peasants and artisans were greatly exploited and reduced to a state of abject misery. This mass discontent of the exploited people, all non-Brahmans, led to a social revolution in the 14th century. Islam became the panacea to the oppressed and the exploited Kashmiri. The mass conversion to Islam was decisively helped by the Islamic message of universal brotherhood of man and its opposition to iniquitous caste groupings.

Apart from the universal conversion of all non-Brahmans, many Brahmans also embraced Islam out of conviction. The majority of Brahmans, however, stuck to their creed and suffered no loss of status or privilege. During the rule of Sultans, the administration continued in the hands of the traditional official class, the Brahmans. They also retained key ministerial jobs. Inter-marriages between Muslims and Brahmans were not uncommon in the 14th and 15th centuries.

During Sikandar's rule (1389-1413 AD) the Brahman prime minister, Suha Bhatta embraced Islam and assumed the name Saif-ud-Din. The neo-convert in his enthusiasm, to retain personal influence and privileges, subjected Brahmans to

harassment. This led to exodus of some Brahmans to the plains of India. Suha Bhatta was also motivated by a desire to demolish any potential rivalry to his status from the Brahman community.

Zain-ul-Abidin made handsome amends to reverse the policies of Suha Bhatta. He encouraged the migrants to return to Kashmir and also invited many Brahmans from Jagannath and Kurukshetra to settle in Kashmir. Henceforward, the repatriated Brahmans were called *Banamasis* and the indigenous ones known as *Malamasis*. The king gave Brahmans lands for rehabilitation and bestowed rich gifts on them. Zain-ul-Abidin's practice of religious toleration is a unique example in the subcontinental history. He participated in Brahman festivals and undertook pilgrimages to Hindu temples. Land settlement and agriculture were entrusted to the charge of three Brahmans - Madho Koul, Ganesh Koul and Gopala Koul. They recruited on subordinate posts of patwaris and others, men from their own community. Brahmans were ministers and courtiers and as a community they became a favoured class under Zain-ul-Abidin's dispensation. (Killam, Kashmiri Pandit, Page 59). The king encouraged Brahmans to learn Persian, the court language. The section of Brahmans who learnt Persian and accepted government jobs were called *Karkuns* whereas those who clung to the study of Sanskrit alone and occupied themselves with priestly functions became known as *Bachi Bhattas*. To perpetuate this distinction inter-marriage between the two sections of Brahmans was discouraged. "This is an example of narrow mindedness and bigotry of Kashmiri Brahmans". (P.K. Parmu, History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir, Page 144).

The establishment of Mughal imperialism in Kashmir in 1586 sowed the seeds of division between the Muslims and the Brahmans. Though Akbar entered Kashmir at the invitation of some Muslims, yet he systematically excluded them from higher echelons of administration. Muslim recruitment in the Mughal army was banned thereby curbing their martial spirit. This policy was subsequently followed by the Afghans, the Sikhs and the Dogras.

Most regrettably, "The Government of India, after independence, also made a policy decision to exclude the Muslims of Kashmir from the armed forces" (Sheikh Abdullah, autobiography page 576).

Whenever the Mughals found it expedient to employ local people, they preferred Brahmans to Muslims. The Brahmans were freely recruited in the Mughal army and infact Nur-Jehan's body guards were under the command of a Kashmiri Brahman, Miru Pandit. They received generous land grants and became influential and affluent. Killam testifies that Brahman ascendancy in the political field was unrivalled in Kashmir and the bureaucracy was manned by them (Kashmiri Pandits, Page 116). Pandit Mahadev was Kashmir's prime minister from 1650-1657.

To frustrate the urge of Kashmiri masses to regain independence from the Mughal clutches, Akbar cunningly utilised the Brahmans as informants of the Mughal court. The Brahmans obliged him and developed a vested interest in working against the legitimate interests of the majority community in Kashmir. This is the genesis of how the Brahmans became the fifth column in Kashmir.

The establishment of the Mughal rule not only ensured their privileges and status in Kashmir but the Brahmans were encouraged to seek green pastures in the Indian plains too. Jawahar Lal Nehru's ancestor, Raj Koul was granted a jagir by the Mughal emperor, Farrukhsiar in 1716 and encouraged to settle in the imperial capital of Delhi (Nehru, autobiography, Page 1). A number of Brahmans accompanied Akbar from Kashmir in 1589 and settled in Agra and Delhi. Pandit Sada Koul was perhaps the first Kashmiri Brahman to settle in Agra after receiving lands, houses and titles from the Mughal emperor. The Brahmans became influential at the Mughal court. Jai Ram Bhan, an important Kashmiri courtier was instrumental in seeking an exclusive nomenclature for the Brahmans of Kashmir. The Mughal emperor Mohammad Shah (1719-1748 AD) issued a royal proclamation designating the Kashmiri Brahmans as Pandits. This label has ever since gained currency.

Gradually the Pandits spread all over India and wangled key positions for the community. From Mir Jaffar's Bengal to Nizam's Hyderabad in the south, the Pandits made their home everywhere. There is hardly a state in India where at one time or the other a Kashmiri Pandit was not appointed as a minister in the princely states.

Afghan rule (1753-1819 AD), by common consent, was cruel and oppressive. J.L. Killam concedes that: "The lot of the Pandits when compared to other people of Kashmir was indeed happier. The political power was generally and largely centred in their hands. The local bureaucracy was manned by them and some of them were employed in offices even at Kabul" (Kashmiri Pandits page 240). The Afghans preferred to govern Kashmir with the help of Pandits. Pandit Mahanand Dhar was the first prime minister under Afghan rule. His cousin Kailas Dhar, amassed considerable wealth and wielded influence to the extent that he could get Afghan governors of his choice posted in Kashmir. Subsequently Kailas Dhar himself became the prime minister and committed a few murders with impunity. He was succeeded as prime minister by Pandit Dila Ram who recruited only Pandits to government service. His cunning presence of mind is illustrated by his meeting with the Afghan King at Kabul where the king asked Dila Ram as to why he put a *tilak* mark on his forehead. The Pandit replied that it was a representation of Allah. The king further enquired why he had anointed his ear tips also. In reply, he said the two marks symbolised the two witnesses needed to prove a fact according to Muslim law. Finally the king asked as to why he had put a mark on his throat as well. Dila Ram replied, it signified that the person who denies the truth of his statement needs to be hanged (Killam, Kashmiri Pandits page 201). The king bestowed rich gifts and honours on Dila Ram! Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar was another prime minister during the Afghan times. He secured wealth and lands for himself and appointed his brother Mirza Pandit as the overlord of north Kashmir. Nand Ram Tiku went all the way to Kabul to become a minister there. He struck coins in his name

called the Nand Rami rupee which was in circulation in the tribal areas till at least 1910 AD. He ruled Kashmir, from Kabul, through his relations, bypassing the Afghan governors. One of his brothers, Haradas Tiku became a minister in Kashmir. Three Pandits Birbal Dhar, Suku Ram Safaya and Mirza Pandit were entrusted with the job of revenue collection. Birbal Dhar was found guilty of embezzlement to the tune of Rs. one lac. When the Afghan governor demanded this money, the Pandit community held a secret conference and resolved to invite Ranjit Singh to invade Kashmir. Birbal Dhar went to Lahore and accompanied the invading Sikh army thereby ushering in Sikh rule in Kashmir. While Birbal Dhar was conspiring with Ranjit Singh at Lahore, it was Kudoos Gojwari who provided the hide-out to Birbal's family. This news was carried to the Afghan governor by Birbal's son-in-law. Consequent upon this treachery, Kudoos alongwith his family members was brutally murdered. The Pandits in all fairness cannot escape the charge of having collaborated with Afghan repression and cruelty in Kashmir.

The Kashmiri Muslims never reconciled themselves to being subjects of the Sikh rule (1819-1846 AD). The Sikhs, likewise, did not trust the Muslims. The Pandits once again occupied the centre stage of power and influence in Kashmir. The Sikh rulers received unstinted support from Pandits. The Pandit community, settled in Lahore and Amritsar, wielded considerable influence at the Ranjit Singh's court. Birbal Dhar having got away with embezzlement in the Afghan rule, was once again given charge of revenue collection. He resorted to his old game of rapacity and after much hesitation, the Sikh rulers were constrained to imprison him. He died in prison. Ganesh Dhar, as prime minister obtained extensive jagirs and resorted to unbridled nepotism. He was followed by Pandit Tilak Chand Munhsi as prime Minister. Judicial administration and revenue collection were awarded to Raj Kak Dhar.

During the Dogra rule (1846-1947 AD) the Pandits continued to symbolise instruments of tyranny in Kashmir. The village administration, the revenue department and the shawl

department continued under their control. When the first flicker of trade union activity was sparked by the poor shawl weavers on 29th April 1865, it was Raj Kak Dhar who massacred 28 innocent people at Zaldagar. This 'heroic' deed earned Raj Kak promotion as governor of Kashmir. Pandits were not only exempted from the dreaded practice of forced labour but it was the Pandit officials who forced the poor Muslim peasantry into forced labour. The greedy revenue officials who literally sucked the blood of poor villagers were all Pandits. During the Dogra rule the Kashmiri Pandits acted as prime ministers, governors, heads of department, Maharajas secretaries, members of the Durbar, the state council and the *Prajha Sabha* (assembly). More than 90% of the posts in the revenue, education and other departments of the state were monopolised by the Pandits.

Sir Walter Lawrence, Kashmir's settlement commissioner nearly a hundred years ago, comments thus: "Peculation was placed on a safe and intelligent basis when the administration was practically vested in the hands of the Pandits of Kashmir. From a patwari, at the bottom rung of the revenue ladder, upto the governor of Kashmir, the entire administration was manned by Pandits... It is to be regretted that the interests of the state and of the people should have been entrusted to one class of men, and still more to be regretted, that these men, the Pandits, should have systematically combined to defraud the state and to rob the people. The Pandits are loyal to one another, and the village patwari knows that when awkward questions are asked he has friends right upto the top of the administration." Writing about the employment of Pandits under the Dogra rule Lawrence records: "In recent times there were few Pandits who were not in receipt of pay from the state, and the number of offices was legion. But though this generosity in the matter of official establishments was an enormous boon to the Pandit class, it was a curse and misfortune to the Muslims of Kashmir; for the Pandit does not value a post for its pay, but rather for its perquisites, and every post in the Valley was quickly made a source of perquisites" (Valley of Kashmir Page 400-401). Tyndale Biscoe, writing a hundred

years ago, records thus: "The Brahman boys in the school were the sons or grandsons of those officials who had bullied and squeezed the Muslim peasants for years past, and their large houses in the city, with all their wealth, were a standing witness to their looting powers, for the salary they received from the state was quite insignificant. Now their parents had sent them to school, so that they might get state employment and follow in the steps of their forefathers, and by aid of their English education they might even go one better than their progenitors". (Biscoe, Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade Page 268).

When the political movement against Dogra despotism started in 1931, the Pandit community not only kept itself aloof from the oppressed peoples agitation but positively sided with the Maharaja. The Glancy Commission was appointed in 1931 to look into the grievances of various sections of people. In recognition of the legitimate and long-standing grievances of Muslims, the commission made recommendations to give some relief to the predominant Muslim subjects of the State. These recommendations in no way threatened the privileged Pandit community but they still launched a violent movement called the "*Roti agitation*", highlighting their imaginary grievances. Pandit P.N. Bazaz, a liberal intellectual was an honourable exception in this agitation as he refused to become a prisoner of fanaticism of his community. Bazaz, however paid a price for his integrity by becoming an outcast in the Pandit community.

Partition of India resulted in terrible communal conflagration throughout the subcontinent. The Valley of Kashmir was an exception. While Jammu province witnessed an organised anti-Muslim carnage in 1947, the life, honour and property of the Pandit community in Kashmir remained unscathed. This is a tribute to religious humanism of Kashmiris. When the subcontinent was aflame, Gandhiji saw a 'ray of light' only in the Valley.

The National Conference had adopted the 'New Kashmir' charter in 1944. One of its principal ideals was land reforms. When Sheikh Abdullah's government implemented the promised land reforms in 1950, the Pandits interpreted this socialist

legislation in communal terms. They ranted against abolition of *Jagirdari*, *Zamindari* and usury.

A suave, worldly-wise and a cunning Pandit called D.P. Dhar joined the Sheikh Abdullah government in 1948, as a junior minister. Instead of being loyal to the State and to the totality of its inhabitants, he assumed the role of Delhi's fifth column in Kashmir. He forgot his ministerial duties and instead reduced himself to the role of an intelligence agent and an informant of Delhi. He was a principal actor in the drama of Sheikh Abdullah's dismissal and arrest in 1953. More than 2,000 innocent people were killed in Kashmir following the Sheikh's arrest. Sheikh Abdullah holds D.P. Dhar personally responsible for these deaths (Autobiography pages 624, 626). In the wake of armed infiltration from Pakistan in 1965, hundreds of houses were razed to the ground in Batmaloo and Gangabug. This was D.P. Dhar's personal 'achievement' too.

Parmeshwari Handoo, a sales girl in a Srinagar departmental store embraced Islam in July '67 and married her colleague Ghulam Rasool Kant. This trivial incident was blown out of proportion by the Pandits, charging the Muslims of kidnapping a minor Pandit girl. The municipal and school records, of course, established her majority. The Pandits refused to face the facts and instead launched a violent agitation. Balraj Madhok of the Jana Sangh rushed to Srinagar and made a highly inflammatory speech at Sheetal Nath temple and 'advised' the Muslims to vacate Kashmir. D.P. Dhar, though a cabinet minister in the State, fuelled the irrational fanaticism of the Pandit community. Mir Qasim, then Congress chief of Kashmir issued a statement in September '67: "The communal harmony in Kashmir was disturbed by the Pandits according to a well planned conspiracy. The role which the Muslim community played during the recent Hindu agitation was quite constructive in comparison with that of the minority community. The Pandits will have to mend themselves and change their attitude. It is evident that there is a move to convert the Muslim population of the Valley to Hinduism but I will openly say that it has given a serious set back to the concept

of secularism in the country.”

It is clear from the foregoing that inspite of their numerical insignificance, the Pandits have (mis)guided the destiny of Kashmiri Muslims for the last 600 years. In contemporary Kashmir, the Pandits enjoy considerable political and administrative clout. They are soft-spoken and have an equable temperament. Owing to their intellectual capabilities they have contributed handsomely to literature, philosophy and culture of Kashmir. Pandit academics and professionals have rendered valuable services to their motherland. It is, however, in the political sphere that Pandits are extremely short-sighted, their education notwithstanding. They have consistently refused to sincerely sympathise with the legitimate political aspirations of the vast majority of long oppressed Kashmiris.

The rise of militancy and the mass uprising in Kashmir for realisation of the promised right of self-determination unsettled the deceptively calm atmosphere in Kashmir. The Governor acted most unwisely and cruelly by unleashing a planned massacre of the Muslims of the Valley. The situation took a grave turn in January'90 following the Gaw Kadal carnage. Kashmir has ever since been in the grip of widespread grief and panic. The Pandits know in their heart of hearts that the movement in Kashmir for political emancipation is totally non-communal. It is very natural for the privileged classes, including the Pandits to view the uprising of the oppressed and the down-trodden with apprehension. The Governor finding himself cornered by the near universal revolt of Kashmiris tried desperately to communalise the situation. This was a trap which was laid both for the Muslims and the Pandits. It must be recorded, in anguish, that the Pandits walked straight into Jagmohan's trap and allowed themselves to be used cynically for nefarious ends.

H.N. Jatoo, a self-styled leader of the Pandits through a whispering campaign directed all Pandits to leave the Valley by April'90. It is an open secret that Jagmohan used material and monetary inducements to ensure migration of Pandits to Jammu

and Delhi. Hundreds of buses and trucks were made available at government expense to facilitate Pandit migration. Air tickets were offered without charges. Regrettably, a section of the Pandit community resorted to a vicious campaign of vilification against their Muslim brethren. They cooked up stories of loot, arson, murder and rape as a justification for their migration. It is estimated that nearly one lac people have left Kashmir. It is, however, reassuring that more than 20,000 Pandits have not deserted their Muslim compatriots in this grave phase of Kashmir history.

H.N. Wanchoo, a Pandit leader and chief of the Peace and Solidarity Council of Kashmir has issued a number of statements in the last one year, accusing the Government of India of pursuing a policy of genocide of Kashmiri Muslims. It must be said to the credit of Wanchoo that his patriotism, honesty and integrity did not sag in the face of political manipulations of the administration. The government-controlled television showed a programme on 21st February'91 whereby the Pandits staying in Kashmir expressed full confidence in their Muslim neighbours. They categorically said that there was no reason or justification for anyone to leave Kashmir on denominational grounds. A few Pandits were killed by the militants, not because they were Pandits but allegedly for being police informants. To put the record straight, the number of Muslims killed allegedly for being informants far exceeds the number of Pandits killed.

A group of eminent human rights activists, under the leadership of V.M. Tarkunde visited Kashmir in April' 90 and recorded their impression thus:- "Hindus have received full co-operation from the local Muslims. The Muslims shared their rations and other items of day to day requirements with them. There is total communal harmony in Kashmir. Those people who had come out had either over-reacted to the situation or because of certain other reasons which could be winter, curfew or closure of offices and educational institutions. Not a single case of looting or arson of non-Muslim property had taken place" (Report on Kashmir situation

April'90). Certain interested elements propagated that all migrants would be provided with free plots of land in Jammu alongwith cash and other requisite facilities. There was a deliberate attempt to communalise the situation by setting up relief camps outside the Valley. When thousands of Sikhs were massacred in Delhi in November'84, no relief camps were ever established in areas outside Delhi. Similarly, thousands of Muslims killed in India during the course of routinised riots never enjoyed the facility of living in relief camps established outside their towns, where they had been living. In contrast, while there is not a single case of communal rioting in the Valley, the Governor preferred to set up relief camps at a distance of 300 kilometres in Jammu. While the Pandits in relief camps in Jammu and Delhi were getting their salaries, the Muslim employees in the Valley who could not attend their duties because of curfew were not receiving any emoluments. Jagmohan preferred to pay compensation to families of the Pandit victims who were considered to be police informers but so far not a single penny has been paid to many more such Muslim families of the victims.

The Pandits were evacuated under a conspiracy to communalise the situation within Kashmir in particular and without in general. Jagmohan created panic among Pandits by a whispering campaign that there was going to be a massive house hunting in combing operations of militants and that security forces will have to shoot down 'offenders' and in such a melee it would be impossible to distinguish between Pandits and Muslims. The militants warned people against occupying, tampering with and defiling any non-Muslim property. The Kashmiri Muslims have lived upto their professions. The keys of houses of Kashmiri Pandits are in the safe custody of their Muslim neighbours till date.

The Jammu people are getting restive by the continued presence of Pandits amongst them. There are grave undercurrents of tension simmering in Jammu between the Dogras and the Pandits. The prices of eatables have sky-rocketed. Land prices in Jammu have gone up. Residential accommodation in Jammu is

becoming a big problem.

While the government's efforts to provide relief to the migrants in Jammu and Delhi are laudable, the same administration turns a blind eye to the plight of Muslim inhabitants of the Valley. This discrimination is preposterous. On the one hand, innocent people of Kashmir are massacred, looted, insulted, humiliated, beaten, arrested, tortured and raped and on the other hand, the same government shows a demonstrative concern for the Pandits. This attitude has not only resulted in grave distrust of the government intentions but has also made Pandits a suspect community in Kashmir.

The Pandit employees receive their monthly salaries regularly in Jammu and Delhi without putting in any work for the last one-and-a-half-year now. In addition, their families receive a monthly allowance also. Besides, most of the migrants have taken up jobs and assignments outside Kashmir. The central government offices in the Valley and the various departments of the state government have come to a grinding halt owing to continued absence of Pandit employees.

A section of the communally-inclined Pandits have aligned themselves with the Hindu chauvinist organisations like the BJP, the RSS and the Shiv Sena. They made fantastic suggestions to the effect that Indian flags must fly on top of every house in the Valley and that Kashmir should be declared a security area and ex-servicemen should be settled along the Line of Control. They have also praised the scorched - earth policy of Jagmohan. This is the crux of the present Muslim-Pandit relationship in Kashmir. The Muslims of Kashmir consider Jagmohan as an instrument of genocide whereas the Pandits hail him as a saviour. Some Pandit intellectuals suffer from the historical hangover of being 'gods on earth' and have opined that the Indian Government should recapture and reconquer Kashmir. This is an odious justification for the government's policy of genocide in Kashmir.

One K.L. Koul, let the cat of conspiracy out of the

Pandit bag in a letter to *Alsafa* dated 18.9.1990. ".....Pandits were told that the government had plans of killing about one lac Kashmiri Muslims in order to overcome the uprising against India. Pandits were assured that they will be looked after well, that they will be provided relief, free ration, jobs and free accommodation. They were assured that once the proposed massacre in Kashmir was completed and the movement curbed, they would be sent back to the Valley. My community now understands that it was a very crude way of painting the mass uprising against India as nothing but a communal flare up. The Indian government tried to fool the world by depicting the uprising as a handiwork of Muslim fundamentalists who had turned against non-Muslims and had thrown them out of their homes.... I know that my community has lost the affection, love, respect and goodwill of Kashmiri Muslims for having betrayed them. I feel ashamed to admit that my community has stabbed the Muslims in the back. This all happened at the instance of Jagmohan. Some self-styled Pandit leaders exploited the situation and Pandits became refugees in their own land...."

A few self styled Pandit leaders have continued to mislead the members of their community. They have taken out processions in Jammu and Delhi demanding stern action in Kashmir. The Pandits even demonstrated outside the U.S. embassy in Delhi. They have also represented to the United Nations Commission for Refugees and the Pope about their self-inflicted problem.

The Kashmiri Muslim has not cast off his centuries old traditions of compassion, love and brotherhood, inspite of grave provocations. Jiya Lal Raina of Natipora died a natural death on 11th June '90. With all his relations away in Jammu, it was the local Muslim preacher Haji Ahmed Ali who performed the rites and lit the funeral pyre. Kantha Ram of Langeet and two old relations of principal Sapru of Netaji School were similarly cremated by their Muslim neighbours.

Some mischievous elements among Pandits were hellbent on defaming the local Muslims. A number of instances

have appeared in the local press detailing how some Pandits attempted to put their houses on fire in the Valley with a view to tarnishing the image of their Muslim neighbours.

The most glaring instance was that of a Medical College teacher who attempted to set his house on fire in the Rawalpura colony. The mischief was detected by the vigilant neighbours who at once summoned the fire brigade and informed the local police station. FIR was lodged straight away. The evil design was nipped in the bud. The learned doctor succeeded neither in blaming his neighbours nor could he fool his insurance company.

Twenty Pandits addressed a joint letter to *Alsafa* on 22nd September'90 which inter alia said; "It is an open secret that the Indian occupation forces had drawn a plan to massacre a large section of Kashmiri Muslims particularly in the age group of 14 to 25 so that the people could be enslaved for all times to come. The plan was to make the Pandits migrate from the Valley so that the uprising against occupation forces could be painted as a communal flare up and the massacre of Muslims could be termed as a fight against the communal forces. The orders to foreign journalists to vacate the Valley and restrictions on the local press should be seen in that perspective. The idea was to keep the world community ignorant of the real issue and create a cover for the sinister designs of the occupation forces.... we were assured that as soon as the people of the Valley were silenced and made to surrender, we shall be sent back to our homes.... we feel cheated because we understand that it is not a war between two religions but a struggle for independence and the struggle for right of self-determination which is the birth right of every human being."

It is crystal clear that Pandits are repentant now about their unwise and uncalled for migration. The situation calls for a fundamental change of heart on their part. Without sounding sanctimonious, let it be stated that Muslims and Pandits of Kashmir constitute a single nation. They have more in common with each other than either community has with any other ethnic group outside Kashmir. The Pandits should cease to be apologists for those who

have wronged Kashmiris. The two communities should appreciate each others fears and anxieties and should respect each others legitimate aspirations. The fate of the two communities is inextricably linked and they should strive together to secure an honourable place for Kashmir and all its inhabitants. The relationship should be based on mutuality and equity and not between the privileged and the under-privileged classes.

CHAPTER 16

EPILOGUE

"Such is Kashmir, the country, which may be conquered by the forces of spiritual love but not by the armed might."

(Kalhana)

Kashmir has a well-defined geography, extending over an area of 228,070 square kilometres. Its current population is believed to be 12 million. Of the 160 sovereign and independent nations represented at the United Nations, Kashmir has a greater area than 68 countries and a bigger population than 90 independent nations.

Kashmir has a legitimate claim to a well-recorded and eventful history of its own. With the exception of a few interludes when it formed a part of bigger kingdoms or empires, Kashmir has maintained its separate political identity, with its own kings and queens, Hindu and Muslim upto 1586 A.D. The Mahayana doctrine of Buddhism was born in Kashmir and flourished here for centuries. For ages, this land was the home of great Sanskrit scholars. Advaita Saivism took its birth in Kashmir and it retains its distinct character till the present time. Islam, as it is practised in Kashmir has a distinct flavour of its own. The *rishi* movement of Kashmir imparted a new dimension to Islamic mysticism. The ethical concept of human brotherhood beyond the bounds of closed religious groupings has always animated the Kashmiris.

Ethnically also, Kashmir has a unique identity of its own. The immigrants in Kashmir from time immemorial were absorbed peacefully by the indigenous population. The Kashmiri language contains a large number of Sanskrit words but the language itself is not of Sanskrit origin. The Kashmiri language

belongs to the Dardic group of languages which, though not Sanskritic, is Aryan in its origin.

Culturally, the people of Kashmir are a race apart from their neighbours. It is well known that long before the advent of the Mughals, Kashmir had earned fame as a centre of great learning, culture, art, literature, poetry and painting. Kashmir has claims to its inimitable music, architecture and archaeological monuments. Kashmiris have their own customs, rituals, ceremonies, dress and food habits. The people of this land are zealous of their separate cultural personality and regional identity.

By virtue of history, geography, race, language and culture, Kashmiris constitute a nation. By all canons of international law we are a nation. This nation lost its independence to the Mughal imperialism in 1586 A.D. but the urge to reassert its independent nationhood has not deserted the Kashmiri nation.

With the advent of independence of the subcontinent in 1947, sovereignty of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir was not vested in its people and hence the disastrous consequences for the people of the State. India and Pakistan, after months of armed hostilities in 1947-48 over the future of Kashmir, unambiguously acknowledged Kashmiris right of self-determination. Both the countries solemnly pledged to hold a plebiscite in Kashmir. These promises are enshrined in the Security Council resolutions of April 1948, August 1948 and January 1949.

Kashmir is a truncated country since the cease-fire agreement was arrived at between India and Pakistan in January 1949. India is in control of two-thirds of the area of Kashmir and three-fourths of its population whereas Pakistan has one-third of the area and one-fourth of the population. The line separating the two parts of Kashmir is an arbitrary, artificial and an unnatural division. Our geography has been mutilated, our homes and hearths divided and families separated.

The Line of Control (cease fire line was renamed line of control in 1972) is a source of emotional and psychological

trauma to the Kashmiris on either side. About a million Kashmiris are refugees in Pakistan; nearly 3 lac people live in Britain and one lack people of Kashmir are dispersed all over the globe.

The fugitive Maharaja of Kashmir acceded to India in october 1947. The Government of India rightly regarded the accession as provisional and temporary, subject to the will of people. Originally, only three subjects of defence, foreign affairs, and communications in regard to Kashmir were vested in the Union of India. The Indian constitution guaranteed a special status to the State of Jammu and Kashmir by virtue of Article 370. It further pledged constitutionally through Article 253 that the final disposition of the state shall be made by the government of the state. The sad tale of unfulfilled promises, broken pledges and persistent betrayals began soon after the temporary accession took place.

Persistent denial of democracy and steady erosion of constitutionally guaranteed autonomy have exposed New Delhi's intentions towards Kashmir. They have disfigured their own constitution which does not mandate deployment of paramilitary forces and army in Kashmir, for maintenance of internal security, let alone sideline the local machinery of law and order. The Government of India has practised legalised despotism in Kashmir. India has gone back on its solemn pledge of plebiscite, too.

India and Pakistan have already fought three wars over the future of Kashmir. The relations between the two countries have been strained and are likely to remain so in future also, thanks to the unresolved Kashmir issue. Both countries are arming themselves to the teeth on account of Kashmir. They are engaged in a rat race to acquire more and more lethal weapons at the expense of their miserably poor, hungry, ill-clad and ill-educated people. Both countries have either acquired or are on the threshold of acquiring nuclear weapons. India's Punjab problem is a corollary of the unresolved Kashmir dispute.

India, on its part, has exhausted all possible options and avenues of subjugating and silencing the people of Kashmir.

Successive Indian regimes have utilised unscrupulous, self-seeking and power hungry politicians of Kashmir to lend legitimacy to their rule in Kashmir. The results of these failed experiments are glaring before everybody. The successive governments of India have manipulated and controlled the Kashmir scene through questionable means but with no fruitful results.

The farce of rigged elections was imposed on the State on eight occasions since 1951. These fraudulent elections have further exposed the Indian intentions in Kashmir. Freedom fighters ever since 1947, have been harshly and inhumanely dealt with. Thousands of Kashmiris have sacrificed their lives in pursuit of political rights.

The struggle of Kashmiris for political emancipation in the last few decades in general and in the last 2 years in particular should open everybody's eyes. The Government of India has resorted to every conceivable method of crushing the uprising. Their current attitude and policies in Kashmir smack of genocide. India's vicious propaganda campaign against the freedom struggle and their attempts at communalisation of the situation will not alter the course of history. Dubbing the current movement as fundamentalist and terrorist will not detract from the fact that Kashmiris as a nation are hungering for freedom. India brags about its secular democracy and rule of law at home and internationally it champions human rights, self determination, anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism. Kashmiris have, through the bitter and brutal experience of last 2 years, seen the hollowness of India's righteous rhetoric. Indians passionately advocate the just Palestinian cause but they refuse to fulfil their own pledges to Kashmiris.

The African freedom fighter, Nelson Mandela is rightly lionised by India but thousands of Kashmiri freedom fighters are rotting in the Indian prisons. India's voice in the international fora was heard with reverence, particularly in spheres of emancipation of oppressed and chained people but Indian prestige is bound to suffer on account of its handling of the Kashmir problem. India's

prevarications on Kashmir are obvious. Its fallacious arguments for retention of Kashmir- linking Kashmir with Indian Muslims or with Pakistan's domestic or international policies -- are irrelevant to Kashmiris struggle for freedom.

The people of Kashmir have not reconciled themselves to foreign rule ever since Mughal occupation. They have resisted peacefully and fought spasmodically against alien domination. They are solidly determined than ever before and they can never be subjugated perpetually. Morality, equity and lessons of history are on their side. They are participating in a well organised movement. The people of Kashmir shall continue their fight for human and fundamental rights and also for political independence, economic emancipation and social justice, till they succeed. If North and South Vietnam can reunify; if the Berlin wall gets dismantled resulting in reunification of Germany, there is no logic why the artificially divided Kashmir should not unite under the banner of a single nation.

The successful campaign for democratisation of Eastern Europe, the heroic Afghan struggle against Soviet occupation and the Baltic States resolute determination to unfetter themselves, have all exercised a positive effect on the current struggle for freedom in Kashmir.

India should be convinced by now that Kashmir does not consider itself to be a part of India emotionally. It is futile to condemn Kashmir to the status of a colony. India with its glorious heritage can ill afford to be guilty of colonising the unwilling Kashmiri nation. It is high time India reads the writing on the wall and stops being an ostrich. Likewise, Pakistan should not play the crocodile and shed insincere tears. India and Pakistan must respect Kashmiris urge and right to self-determination and help in restoring independent nationhood to a unified Kashmir. A tripartite conference of India, Pakistan and Kashmir, imbued with sincerity, dedication and statesmanship, can yield a solution, honourable to all the parties concerned. The international community should muster sufficient moral and

diplomatic will to persuade India and Pakistan to find an honourable and durable solution to the problem. Unrepresented as Kashmiris are in the comity of nations, muffled as their voices are, they are determined to carve out a place of dignity for themselves on the international stage.

It is not beyond human ingenuity to rid Kashmir of its centuries-old servitude and exploitation. A bilateral approach between India and Pakistan or between Kashmir and India cannot provide a durable solution to the festering problem. Kashmir is not a territorial or a border dispute between India and Pakistan. Similarly, it is not, an abstract issue, a sterile problem or an academic question. Kashmir problem involves fundamentally the urges, aspirations, ideals and visions of the Kashmiri nation. A lasting solution to the tangle must take into account, Kashmiris right to decide their own future in an unfettered manner, their unique regional and cultural identity and creation of an atmosphere conducive to development of their intellectual and creative faculties.

Kashmir was economically viable until 1947 and it can assert its viability once again. Tourism, fruit industry, handicrafts, electricity potential based on water resources are the immediate resources of Kashmir. Given the right political climate, this land can improve its agriculture and develop industry too. The enormous human resources of Kashmir can develop only in an atmosphere of stability and self-confidence. An independent Kashmir can also undo the present geographical wrongs. Instead of utilising only the Banihal route, Kashmir can have an alternative link with the outside world via the more dependable Rawalpindi road.

A peaceful resolution of Kashmir issue would ensure peace and prosperity to the peoples of South Asia and would promote regional cooperation, stability and harmony. Let all people of goodwill, humanity and sincerity put their heads together to heal the wounded paradise.

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